

Tan Arty, Boubly Club - 16-26 Jan - Stan Douglas
St Johns 16-26 Jan - Carol Ruffell P22 (P.14)

The Australian Bush Poets Association Inc. - Newsletter -



Volume 9 No. 6

October - November 2002

VICTORIAN STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Victorian Bush Poetry State Championships are only a matter of days away.

Gippsland Bush Poets President, Mr. Dennis Carstairs, has remarked on the exceptional amount of outside enquiry regarding the competition and asks that interested poets be reminded that they still have time for late entries if they are considering taking up the challenge.

Judges for the State Championships are Neil McArthur, Graeme Johnson, Sue Gleeson and Eric Britton, (President of the Henry Lawson Society).

The Championships are now a recognised major event in the Wellington Shire Councils calendar, and will be run as part of the award winning Gippsland Writers Festival.

The event will be staged in the Stratford Mechanic's Hall on October 12th and 13th.

Poets Breakfasts on the Saturday and Sunday will be held in the Avon Hotel from 7.30 am each morning.

The Gippsland Bush Poets will run the Victorian Bush Poetry Championships according to the rules and guidelines set down by the Australian Bush Poets Association. Many of Australia's top Bush Poets will be competing.

Competition will be held from 10 o'clock on the Saturday morning, with the finals and presentation of prizes on Sunday.

The overall Victorian Bush Poetry State Champion will receive \$500 and a trophy to the value of \$300. Cash and certificates will go to the runner-up and those commended.

The best Original and Traditional poems will be recognised with cash and trophies.

For further information contact Julie Carstairs, secretary of the Gippsland Bush Poets email: carstairs@i-o.net.au (03) 5145 6128. www.gippslandwritersfestival.net

CHARTERS TOWERS

It's all happening in the Towers on the 1st weekend in October, with the historic town holding the only "Year of the Outback" Event in North Queensland. The Celebrations kicks off on Friday night with a Grand Parade through the main street finishing up at the Show Grounds with a 'Meet and Greet' evening.

Bush Poet and Larrikin, Bobby Miller, will be the feature poet on the Saturday and Sunday mornings with lots of help from such locals as the effervescent Melanie Hall, Tom

Mauloni, Liz Ward and Lee Miller.

In addition there will be Bronco Branding, Camp Drafting, Camel Racing, a Drovers Reunion, a Decade by Decade Fashion Parade, a Bullock Team and Wagon . . . and more. The entertainment never ends.

Yarn-spinners are more than welcome to join the rest of the tale-telling fraternity whilst Professor Bill Gammage, along with Bruce Simpson, will be on hand to record any tales of yesteryear.

MT. ISA POET'S BREAKFAST

The Bush Poets' Breakfast in Mount Isa in August was a great success. It was staged by the Zonta Breakfast Club, supported by a RADF grant, and tickets were sold out in advance. Milton Taylor did a wonderful job as both compere and performer, and was supported by Jennifer Haig, Pat Fennell from Mount Isa (Dale Leard's sister) and Veronica Weal.

ABC Radio sent some of the programme live to air, and the whole event did a great deal to promote bush poetry in the Mount Isa area. It's hoped that this will become an annual event.

Milton also did some workshops for local schools while he was here. His presentation was very popular with both students and teachers, and Pat Fennell and Veronica Weal went along taking the opportunity to learn from Milton's expertise.

Ken and Veronica Weal have just returned from a week in Canberra where Veronica was invited to perform her Blackened Billy winning poem "The Spirits Of The Outback" at the National Landcare Awards, which were presented by the Prime Minister in the Great Hall at Parliament House on 21st August.

Veronica said "It was a wonderful evening, and the poem was very well received. To have bush poetry considered as suitable entertainment for such an event is a tribute to its growing popularity."

Australian Bush Poets Association Inc.

(Established 1994)

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Note: Every endeavour is made to
inform readers, poets, competitors etc., of
functions, written and performance
competitions and so on. Space does not
provide to print competition entry terms
and conditions, or details beyond the
closing dates and dates of such event.
Further information in regard to such can
be obtained from the organizers by
sending a SSAE (stamped self-addressed
envelope) to the addresses supplied.

Presidents Report



G'day once again,

I'm very happy to say that things are
running along nicely and without too many
hiccups. The deadline for this issue has been
easily met with copy arriving in plenty of
time thank you to the contributors.

Don't think the year has gone so smoothly
that there haven't been any problems or
complaints.

One constant complaint is that of performers
pinching other poets work and claiming it as their own.

Nothing new I must add, as our literary thieves have been around for
a long, long time. Will Ogilvie wrote: "I have more than once had the
honour paid me of having my verses appropriated entire, and published
unblushingly over another man's name. One literary aspirant copied
from *The Bulletin* my verses 'A Scotch Night', and sent them to various
papers in Scotland over his own signature."

A more recent complaint is that of the supposed lack of
professionalism by organizers of a performance competition of some
years standing on the eastern sea-board, purporting to be using ABPA
competition guidelines.

In cases like this it is only a matter of time before word filters out and
the offending committee or organizer will possibly find they have less
competitors each year.

Word of mouth publicity works both ways, good or bad, but the bad
always travels fastest.

ABPA guidelines are set as examples of how to conduct a festival or
competition but the ABPA does not organize the event or take any part
in the conduct of such.

Competitors offended by the conduct of what they call incompetent
administration should be agree that they are only misleading themselves
by attending such competitions without firstly making enquiries or
asking for entry forms and reading the criteria set down for the occasion.

By not so doing, the poets are showing a grand example of non-
professionalism themselves. They haven't done their homework first,
and are not in a position to argue.

When administration problems are obvious to experienced entrants it
behoves them to advise the organizers of such. Sharing our knowledge
with each other will benefit all in the long term.

The ABPA has a mandate to share the news, whether reporting or
advertising, and cannot act as an umpire in such disputes.

Keep on writin', keep on recitin'

Frank Daniel

ARE YOU ON A COMPILATION CD?

If so, why not get together with the other performers on the CD and
arrange to send just one set of the five CD's required as part of the
nomination process for the 2003 Australian Bush Laureate Awards.
Individual nomination forms and fees would be required but only one
set of five CD's.
Closing date and other details can be found in the article on page 3.

WILL OGILVIE 'BARD OF THE OUTBACK' ASSOCIATION FORMED

The Will Ogilvie 'Bard of the Outback' Association was formed recently in the Lockyer Valley at a meeting of bush poets and supporters of bush poetry. A steering committee has been formed, pending preparation and adoption of a Constitution and Rules.

The meeting was called by Mr. Bob McPhee of Glenore Grove who, for several years, conducted an annual poetry competitions, written and performance, for the Clan Macfle Society as well as the John Dunmore Lang Poetry Prize and the Will Ogilvie Poetry Prize for written compositions.

This Clan McPhee Society conducted the first Bard of the Outback Competition for performance poetry in 1997 at Hungerford; Cunnamulla in 1998, and Rosevale in 1999.

The new Society will continue the annual Will Ogilvie Poetry Prize for written compositions of unpublished bush verse, and the 'Bard of the Outback' competition for performance bush verse, with competitors required to recite poems in 3 categories, Traditional, Original and a Will Ogilvie composition.

The Society's name honours one of our greatest bush balladeers, William Henry Ogilvie, (21.8.1889 – 30.1.1963), who spent twelve years in Australia from the 1890. For much of that time Ogilvie worked in the outback, as a stockman, horse-breaker and drover.

On his arrival in Australia, Will worked for the Scott family, at Belalie Station, on the Warrego River, near Enngonia.

Will Ogilvie is regarded by many as the original Bard of the Outback, and was a close friend of Harry 'Breaker' Morant. One of Will's most popular works is "*Fair Girls and Grey Horses*".

The venue for this year's Bard of the Outback is yet to be decided, but it will almost certainly be in an Outback venue, probably in the Barrington to Bourke district.

Grazier and former drover, Mr. Ken Read of Charleville has won the three Bard of the Outback Titles so far, and is keen to retain the title.

The association is also keen to continue the conduct of the Golden Bell Bush Poetry Competition at Laidley which will be the headquarters of the Association. This event was previously held in conjunction with the Laidley National Heavy Horse Field Days.

The forming of the Society has attracted much interest from bush poets throughout Australia and events conducted by the Society are expected to be well supported.

The Secretary of the association is Mr. Bob McPhee; the Chairperson, Mr. Ron 'Boulia' Bates of Gatton. Ron is well regarded in the bush poet fraternity

CLOSING DATE 15th OCTOBER



Nominations open for 2003 Australian Bush Laureate

Nominations are now open for the prestigious Australian Bush Laureate Awards to be staged again as part of the January 2003 Tamworth Country Music Festival. The new closing date for nominations will be **October 15**, with the awards open to verse recorded and published between **October 1, 2001** and **September 30, 2002**.

This will be the eighth year of the Australian Bush Laureate Awards which were instigated in 1996 to recognise excellence in published and recorded Australian bush poetry.

Past winners have included Frank Daniel, Kelly Dixon, Slim Dusty, Marco Gliori, Murray Hartin, Jim Haynes, John Kane, Mark Kleinschmidt, Bob Magor, Keith McHenry, Bob Magor, Bob Miller, The Naked Poets, Dobe Newton, Carmel Randle, Ray Rose, Alli Ryan, Bill Scott, Bruce Simpson and R M Williams.

The recording and publishing of bush poetry has been growing, as evidenced by the quality of Australian Bush Laureate Award winners and entries over the last few years.

Winners are presented with an attractive, finely crafted sculpture of a pen in the shape of a gumleaf giving the trophy the name "the Golden Gumleaf".

The gala Awards presentation, organised by Singabout Australia and Max Ellis Marketing, will be staged in Tamworth on Tuesday, January 21.

Nomination forms and further details are available from Australian Bush Laureate Awards at PO Box 135, Tamworth, 2340, by telephoning 02 6766 1050 or by email renton@optusnet.com.au

as one of the finest contemporary bush poets.

Further information: Ron Bates, 07 5466 5120 or write to P.O. Box 323 Laidley, 4341.

To HUGH GORDON

For sake of the meet and the muster
The hunts in the oak-scrub and plain;
For sake of the old day, whose lustre
May never shine round us again;
In mind of the head-rope and halter,
The mounts in the dawn and the dew,
I lay my poor gift on the altar
Of friendship, and pledge it to you!

W.H.O.

Letters to the Editor

The totally positive response to the August/September issue of the ABPA newsletter was overwhelming. Not wanting to blow one's own trumpet I have bowed to outside advice in printing excerpts from some of the responses.

"Congratulations on the newsletter, where does all the news and information come from?"

"I have not enjoyed a copy of the ABPA Newsletter as much as I enjoyed the August edition. It was a ripper." —

"The August newsletter was full of interesting reading, I'm still referring to it . . ."

"I share with you your hatred of the word 'guy'. I upset my ex boss by choosing to ignore him completely when he addressed all staff (regardless of sex) with his greeting 'Hi Guys'." —

"It's good to see the newsletter back on an even keel. I know it's a bugger of a job, but you do it so well - and that comes from a lot of members apart from me." —

"I've only been a member for two years and find the ABPA history pages very interesting."

"My wife walked out of a Union meeting when the delegate referring to the members (all women) as guys." —

It is heartening to hear from so many, and I thank the many scribes for their compliments, the subscribers to the poetry and news sections. You are all making it work in your own way.

"The poems in this newsletter by Denis Carstairs and Ross Magnay should be compulsory learning for all school-kids and should be read and totally digested by all politicians and TV and Radio announcers . . ." —

Unfortunately I don't think the kids of today would understand these poems too well, but we could at least try to keep more of our traditional

works before them in the schools, and maybe, with our help, a few more of the cliché's etc. found on American style television would become less used.

We must remember that the word 'guy' has been around for a very long time in Australia, and who knows, for how much longer. It's all here to stay I'm afraid.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many letter writers and apologize for not being able to make reply to them all. On the whole they are most encouraging and all go towards the improvement of the newsletter or other ABPA function. All ideas for improvement have been taken on board and not just stashed away and forgotten. Thanks again.

On a more disturbing note, some letters and phone calls have been received about performers or reciters openly claiming the works of others as 'original'.

All I can say is that should such things happen in your presence have no fears in approaching the offenders and letting them know that this is a much smaller world than they think.

One time I came across a bloke in the Original Section of a competition reciting, and claiming it as his own, 'The Spider from The Gwyder', penned at least fifty years before his birth.

For a moment I thought I had actually discovered the elusive identity of the real 'Anonymous'. Who knows? 'Curlew' might turn up one of these days. Ed. Joe

INFORMATION REQUIRED Lack of space prevents the posting of this poem in whole but, if from the verse below you can identify its title and author, please advise the editor. Wally Finch would also like to know.

"In a humble hut on a scrubby flat, near the land of the setting sun,

Dwelted a poor but honest roustabout, who rejoiced to the name of Dunn.

He could warble as sweet as a bandicoot, he could dance like a kangaroo,

His age was just about five feet ten, and his height about thirty-two." (Read the poem in its entirety next issue).

NOTICE OF MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Australian Bush Poets Association Inc. will be held in Tamworth during Country Music Week on Saturday 25th. January 2003 at 2 pm in St. Peter's Church Hall, Vera St. Tamworth.

All members, intending members and interested persons are cordially invited to attend.

Notices of motions or pending business should be directed to the Secretary ABPA Inc.

Australian Bush Poetry Championships

Expressions of interest regarding the holding of the Australian Bush Poetry Championships in 2004 are now being called for consideration at the AGM in January. Please direct all correspondence to the Secretary ABPA Inc.

Australian Bush Poetry State Championships

Expressions of interest regarding the holding of Australian Bush Poetry State Championships in the different States in 2003 and 2004 should be directed to the Secretary ABPA Inc. The aim of the Association is to have State Champions recognized in their own States.

Sgd. Ed Parmenter,

Secretary, 1 Avenue St Coff's Harbour NSW 2450

TWO THOUSAND AND TWO

© Jim O'Connor. Longreach 2002

This is the year of two double oh two,
The year of the Outback they say,
But we know the Outback has always been here
And will be for many a day.

So let us hark back to times that are gone
To the packhorse, mailman and drover,
The mailman's no more than a memory now
And the days of the packhorse are over

So now, in this year of the Outback,
Re-enactments the name of the game,
They're droving stock on the routes once again
Where Redford won his claim to fame.
But drovers and methods are different to-day
With Toyotas and trail bikes to ride,
And a big mobile home is the cooks cart they say
With 'fridges and T.V.'s inside.

They even have bunks to sleep in at night,
Regardless of how this may sound,
But I think the old drover in days that are gone
Would prefer his old swag on the ground.
It's seldom we see a horse-tailer these days,
For there aren't any horses to tail,
Just a couple of bikes with a Japanese name
As long as the engines don't fail.

And how do you manage a three hour watch
In the midst of a wet winters night,
When the live wire strung round the mob disappears
When twelve hundred bullocks take fright?
Gone is the music of hobbles and bells
As a forty horse plant feeds along,
Gone now forever the cold midnight watch
And the sound of the night watchman's song.

The night horses now have all vanished,
Gone wherever all good horses go
And we hope they are in a horse heaven
Where clover and soft grasses grow.
They say that we get sentimental
As age creeps up out of the blue,
For there aren't many old packhorse drovers
Left now in two thousand and two.

A XMAS GATHERING

of all Mid North Coast Bush Poets and friends will be held from 12 noon on Sunday, 1st December at the home of Sam and Jenny Smyth, 242 Old Station Rd, East Kempsey, located on the north east side, just on the edge of town. Bring your lunch, (bbq avail.), and a small gift, *marked suit a lady or gent.* (value \$3), which Santa will distribute. Bring your poetry too !!!

Enquiries to Sam Smyth on 02 65626861

O'Mara's Number Five

O'MARA'S TO INVOLVE AUDIENCES in 2003

Preparations are well in hand and looking good for the 2003 'O'Mara's High Country Poets' to be held in Stanthorpe from 14th - 16th March next year with all of the regular sponsors on board again.

Following the success of the 2002 event, where audiences doubled the 2001 attendance figures, the committee will adopt a new judging technique to ensure the audience continues to be treated to an entertaining festival.

"While attending poetry events lately, I have noticed a trend developing in performance competitions with poets performing serious, dramatic works more and more" reports Jack Drake from the organizing committee.

"As a poet, I understand the attraction of a poignant piece delivered in a dramatic style, but a solid diet of such works becomes rather like stew for breakfast to the audience - a bit hard to digest.

"As poets, we tend to go with performances that raise our goose-bumps and disregard the fact that our audience may not be as vitally interested in the wordsmith's art as we are. They would rather have a good belly laugh than be constantly reminded of the harsher realities of life."

Many competitions have only poets and their families for an audience while O'Mara's has been fortunate to have attracted great local support in the past and the committee wishes to protect and encourage this audience rapport.

With this in mind, the organizers have decided to employ a fourth judge to gauge the reaction of the audience.

There will be the standard judging panel of three who will include audience rapport in the score sheets as usual, but the fourth judge will appraise the audience only.

Being a poet familiar with the scene, this judge will soon be able to spot a situation where contestants have arranged their own rent-a-crowd.

This fourth judge will have a reasonable spread of points available - probably 20 - and will allot them according to the reaction of the crowd. His score will be added to the aggregate.

The message to poets intending to enter in 2003, is this: **Be entertaining at O'Mara's.** It is not an attempt to discourage serious poetry. There needs to be a balance. If a serious recitation captures the crowd, more power to the performer.

"We live in difficult times" says Jack, "and when people go to an event, they are doing so to be entertained." O'Mara's number one priority is to hear the accolade of the past four years from the Stanthorpe locals: "*We had a bloody good time at the poetry.*"

Entry forms will be available from October, 2002 for the Stanthorpe event.

Contact Jack Drake - O'Mara's High Country Poets,
Box 414 P.O. Stanthorpe. Ph 07 46 837169
jdrake@halenet.com.au

ENGLISH . . .

In the August/September issue of the Newsletter we spoke of keeping our language Australian - here's another example of a direction in which I think we would prefer not to travel. Ed.

The European Union commissioners have announced that agreement has been reached to adopt English as the preferred language for European communications, rather than German, which was the obvious alternative (preferred by many).

As part of the negotiations, Her Majesty's Government conceded that English spelling had some room for improvement and has accepted a five-year phased plan for what will be known as Euro-English (Euro for short).

In the first year, 's' will be used instead of the soft 'c'. Certainly, sivil servants will resieve this news with joy.

Also, the hard 'c' will be replaced with 'k'. Not only will this klear up konfusion, but typewriters can have one less letter.

There will be growing publik enthusiasm in the sekond year, when the troublesome 'ph' will be replaced by 'f'. This will make words like 'fotograf' 20 per sent shorter.

In the third year, publik akseptanse of the new spelling can be expekted to reach the stage where more komplikated changes are possible.

Governments will enkourage the removal of double letters, which have always ben a deterrent to akurate speling. Also, al wil agre that the horrible mes of silent 'e's in the languag is disgrasful, and they would go.

By the fourth year, peopl wil be reseptiv to steps such as replasing 'th' by 'z' and 'W' by 'V'. During ze fifz year, ze unesesary 'o' can be dropd from vords kontaining 'ou', and similar changes vud of kors; be aplid to ozer kombinations of leters.

After zis fifz yer, ve vil hav a reli sensibl riten styl. Zer vil b no mor trubls or difikultis and evrivun vil find it ezi tu understand ech ozer.

Ze drem vil finali kum tru.

Who designed a keyboard, haven't they heard of alphabetical order ?

If dogs are mans best friend, why do men marry women ?

Why is more money spent on finding better ways to kill people, than what is spent on helping them ?

RUDD'S PUB—NOBBY

No! It's not another example of a futuristic language, it's for real, it's Rudd's Pub in the township of Nobby on the Queensland Darling Downs.

Nobby is located just south of Toowoomba in the heart of Dad and Dave country, the home-place of those great characters made famous by one of our noted literary giants Steele Rudd, pen-name of Arthur Hoey Davis.

As part of the Festival of the Horse, Eugene, publican at Rudd's Pub, will be hosting the second annual competition and show based on bush poetry at the pub on 12th October.

The competition will start at 2 pm followed by the show and other activities.

Sections will be Male - Original; Male - Horse Poem; Female - Original; Female - Horse Poem; Youth - Under 12 and Youth - 12 to 16.

Prize-money for each of the four Adult Sections is \$100 for 1st & \$50 for 2nd

Judges will be Gary Fogarty and Marco Gliori.

Marco and Gary, along with vocalist Kelly Fogarty (winner Overall Junior Champion at the Gold Coast Country Music Festival) will make up the show.

Entry forms will be available from Rudd's Pub Nobby (07) 4696 3211 or SSAE the Licensee, Rudd's Pub, Nobby Qld. 4360

PROFILE: GEOFF SHARP PERFORMANCE POET

A new name to emerge in the Bush Poetry arena is that of Geoff Sharp who won the Australian Bush Laureate Award 2002 for the 'Single Recorded Performance Of The Year' announced at Tamworth in January last.

The Single was a track from his first album 'One Hundred Years Ago.' It was Henry Lawson's great poem 'Faces In The Street' written about 1889 when the writer was only twenty years of age.

Geoff has been performing bush verse for most of his life as he says 'mainly at backyard BBQ's with a little beer and plenty of long suffering friends.'

His first venture into serious performance was at the Jondaryan Woolshed Competition in March 2000 where he surprised himself by winning the Male Traditional Verse Section.

Needless to say, his enthusiasm to the art was well fuelled by this success and he has eagerly embraced any opportunity to promote the popularity of Ballads and Bush Verse whenever he can. In competition he has been a finalist in 2000 and 2001 in the "Leonard Teale Memorial Award" sponsored by the Henry Lawson Society of N.S.W. and was placed second in 2000.

Geoff says he is strictly a performance Poet and not a

Writer - "I do write a bit of rubbish" he said, "but there are far greater Writers than I out there and I am happy to help keep alive the great work of those wonderful scribes who have now passed to history.

"I respect very much the written work for without it I realise I have nothing, but I do believe that performers have a definite role in promoting the worth of Bush Verse.

"That was part of the motive of producing 'One Hundred Years Ago' released in March 2001.



GEOFF SHARP

It also timed nicely with the Centenary of Federation.

"The most outstanding feature of my involvement with ABPA has been the genuine associations with both performers and writers and the support and encouragement particularly from those who have done the hard yards, and built a culture and network through many years of dedicated effort. I have never failed to be moved by the generous nature and goodwill of those with whom I have

been involved, and, while this in many ways reflects the true spirit of the bush, it is great to find old values and standards alive and well."

Geoff is regularly seen performing at a variety of functions and venues in Sth. East Queensland.

He is featured every week at "Binna Burra Mountain Lodge" in the Lamington National Park where the mid-week camp fire is a high-light of evening activities.

He has also worked with some of the well known stars of the craft including, Ray Essery, Shirley Friend and Jack Drake. Geoff has been a resident of Beechmont in the Gold Coast Hinterland for all but six years of his fifty-nine year life. Those six years were spent on the Tweed Coast of N.S. W. He operates a citrus orchard on the mountain, specialising in lemons and red grapefruit.

Geoff has released a new album, 'Tales of a Bushman', 16 of poems by Tom Oliver recited by Geoff with backing music from Marley Luskey.

Both Geoff's albums may be purchased direct from him at P.O. Box 65 Nerang Q 4211 at \$17.00 posted.

Phone. 07 5533 3565.

The Old Station

© Frank Halliwell. Jimboomba, Qld.

The ghosts of Iron Horses haunt
The station in the glade.
The shrill scream of escaping steam
Must still these walls pervade.

She's there, if one should care to look!
Deserted and downcast.
Half-hidden now and overgrown-
A portal to the past.

A passport to a place in time
A world that once I knew,
These great trees that were saplings then,
Now shield her from our view.

They hide the rot and peeling paint
The broken window's stare,
The ancient litter on the platform
Blowing here and there.

Grass clogs the idle right-of-way
The rails are red with rust
And unseen wraiths gaze down the tracks
From windows streaked with dust.

They strain to hear that whistle's moan
Borne by the vagrant breeze.
But all is silent, save the birds
Up nesting in the trees.

The old station is derelict
Its shutters swing awry.
And holes up on the rotting roof
Are open to the sky!

She waits, year after endless year,
Unwitting of her fate!
She's waiting for the next train,
But the next train's running late...

Frank Halliwell

Email- rhymer@pacific.net.au

URL <http://home.pacific.net.au/~rhymer>

While prose may carry all the facts, the
voice of verse is sweeter,

For poetry transports the soul on lilting
rhyme and meter. F.H.

School daze:

May: Are you coming to my party
Raymond?

Raymond: No! I ain't

May: Now Raymond, you know what the
teacher said. 'It's not ain't. It's I'm not
coming, he is not coming, she is not
coming, they are not coming.

Raymond: Blimey! Ain't nobody
coming?



Remembrance Day



Eleventh Hour - Eleventh Day - Eleventh Month

ONLY ONE REMEMBERS

© Ellis Campbell Dubbo NSW

Last Thursday afternoon - at half-past three
we buried Joseph Brown beneath this tree.
Here, shaded by this lofty silver box -
his grave-site's marked by seven moss-strewn rocks.

A dozen folk - or less perhaps - were there.
His only mourner - wrapped in silent prayer
and wheel-chair bound his sister June shed tears;
plagued by Alzheimer's cruel disease for years.

I watched poor Joe depart beneath the ground -
for more than eighty years he's been around.
The township's poor response bewildered me.
Their lack of real respect was plain to see.

"A drunken bum who hangs around the pub -
or wanders like a hermit through the scrub.
No aim in life or pride in how he lives."
A vagabond - it seems - no one forgives.

My mind recoiled in time by fifty years
to jungles of Malaya and my fears.
I would have died if Joe had not been there -
a sniper's bullet found me unaware.

Joe dragged me through the jungle unafraid
while all around us whining bullets sprayed.
No thought of safety for himself appeared -
a man in after years described as "weird".

A gallant soldier of some fierce campaigns
who slogged through trenches swamped by monsoon rains.
He earned a bravery medal more than once -
heroic feats performed on different fronts.

His deeds remained unnoticed by the brass.
Joe never cared, but I thought it a farce.
He saw it through and came home safe at last,
to find himself a bitter man outcast.

His wife had been unfaithful with a Yank -
his home and assets mortgaged to the bank.
A battle weary soldier - sick and sore
vowed sadly, "Mate, I can't take any more."

He'd lost his love - he'd lost his cherished home;
he'd lost his spirit and the will to roam.
He'd lost the things he fought for - lost his right,
but most of all old Joe had lost the fight.

The hell of steamy jungles filled with Japs;
the snarl of snipers bullets - booby traps .

Mates strewn beside him like discarded toys;
with sightless eyes and tangled limbs - just boys.

He'd been to hell and back again for what?
The ones he'd risked his life for soon forgot.
Discarded like a broken china doll
a bitter man consumed by alcohol.
Regarded not with pity - only scorn.
None cared about the torture he had borne.
They saw him only as a drunken bum
a gutless alcoholic wracked by rum.

He never robbed a bank or stole a car.
He never raped a girl or stood a bar
of anything dishonest in his life.
A broken man who'd lost his home and wife.

The crowd was gone, I stood there all alone.
I vaguely heard the traffic's distant drone.
Immersed in memories of a past we shared.
I shed a tear - the only one who cared.

(Winner: Eastwood Hills Traditional Section 2002)

In Flanders Fields

By John McCrae (1915)

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

Armistice Day marked the end of the bloodiest war the world had seen. Although Australia became a nation in 1901 its loyalties still lay with Britain and so the Australian government had committed itself to supporting the British war effort and Australian men volunteered to fight and die on the battlefields of Europe, Turkey and the Middle East.

300,000 young Australian men went to the Great War. Of those 60,000 died and 156,000 were wounded or taken prisoner.

JOHN O'BRIEN COMPETITION

The John O'Brien Poetry and Prose Competition is a facet of the John O'Brien Bush Festival held annually at Narrandera, the gateway to the Riverina District of NSW.

The next festival will be held from 13th to 16th March 2003, and programmes are available from the Narrandera Visitors Centre, P.O. Box 89 Narrandera NSW 2700 or on Freecall 1800 672 392.

Entries for the Written Poetry and Prose Competitions close no later than January 25th 2003, with Section 1. Three Open Classes for Traditional, Contemporary and Humorous Verse. Section 2. Open Class for short stories not exceeding 3000 words, and Section 3. James Horan Memorial Bush Poetry Award.

John O'Brien (Father Patrick Hartigan), Australian Bush Balladist, lived and worked in Narrandera for 27 years.

Locals have many stories to tell of his compassion, his passion for the automobile and sense of humour.

His first collection of poetry, *Around the Boree Log* was published during his time in Narrandera. It out-sold Henry Lawson's writings, equalled 'Banjo' Paterson's and rivalled CJDennis *The Sentimental Bloke*.

His second collection was, according to his wishes, titled *The Parish of St. Mels* as a tribute to his Narrandera parishioners, and was published posthumously in 1954.

Said Hanrahan, The Old Bush School and *Tangmalangaloo* are titles recognised by Australians all over. His poetry reflects that particular brand of 'Irish' Australian-ness that we recognise within our culture.

'John O'Brien' lived his country, and urged Australians to recognise their literature in order that they may recognise the Australian character. The John O'Brien Poetry and Prose Awards, it is hoped, will go some way towards doing just that.

INSURANCE - PUBLIC LIABILITY

If you perform AT ALL. . . this is URGENT!

Public liability cover has skyrocketed since September 11th last year, with massive insurance company losses worldwide.

This is a matter for urgent consideration, performance poets are advised to check their own status as to insurance matters in the light that venues supporting Bush Poetry in Tamworth, and anywhere else for that matter, may not be in a position to allow uninsured performers, novice or professional, on stage. Proof of insurance will have to be furnished before any such appearances.

It could prove dangerous and your ability to perform will be immediately threatened if you have no policy.

Insurance rules governing some festivals and venues have been changed and all entertainers who appear must have public liability cover or the public liability insurance of the festival or venue is voided.

Performers will need to check with their own brokers and venues, but currently one option exists with 'Duck for Cover' an affordable public liability cover for performers, run by performers helping performers on a voluntary basis. Do your own groundwork, make your own decisions, don't wait till the last minute, don't blame us.

URL: www.duckforcover.com.au

Phone 0500 850 850

CHOOKS

© Bessie Jennings Port MacQuarie

People of refinement
(well so my mother claims)
don't speak the way that we do;
they call things different names.

In flash hotels and restaurants
employing fancy cooks
they serve a dish called 'chicken';
at our place we have chooks.

City folk don't speak of 'chooks';
but always, so I'm told,
they call a chook a 'chicken',
even when the bird is old!

So, understand, if you should read
those recipes in books
when they say to use some chicken,
they're really meaning chooks.

They start their lives as chickens,
by hatching out of eggs;
cute little yellow fluffy balls
with tiny spindly legs.

They grow up to be pullets,
with lanky feathered looks,
or cockerels with handsome combs:
but all of them are chooks!

I love my dog and puppies,
my budgies and my cat;
I love to swim, and climb a tree,
and everything like that;

I love my bike and scooter,
and all my toys and books;
I even love my brother!
But I really love our chooks!

HIPSHOT'S CORNER

When I was young I milked a cow,
Before I went to school.
One day a bee flew in her ear,
so I sat there on the stool
until he plopped into the milk
and gave a final shudder.
That bee had a made a beeline in
one ear . . . and out the udder.

My father said when I was young
and working on the farm,
The best place to find a helping
hand
is at the end of your arm.-

KEITH LETHBRIDGE

When Keith Lethbridge puts on his battered bush poet hat, it's "Cobber" who speaks. The mild mannered public servant has to take a back seat. Cobber may have a bad attitude at times, but he speaks to all levels of society, straight from the heart.

As for Keith, he got his first job at the Kimberley Research Station as a farm hand, in February 1963. In 1967 he headed for the Northern Territory, where he worked on a crocodile hunting boat, in all the rivers between Darwin and Arnhem Land. Then he worked at Ayres Rock as a breakfast cook, in the hides factory at Cairns, as a builder's labourer in Sydney and a deckhand on a cray boat at Carpenters Rocks, South Australia.

He then began an illustrious career in the public service, working with Aboriginal communities throughout the State. He only got sacked three times in the next thirty years, which is a pretty good record.

Meanwhile, for every lizard Keith caught, Cobber caught an eighteen foot croc. For every heated debate Keith had, Cobber fought three strong men. For every bicycle Keith rode, Cobber rode a raging bull. Wherever Keith went, Cobber was there too, doing it bigger, better, and in verse. And if Cobber didn't do it, his mate Digger certainly would have, or Mildew the cook, McCarthy the presser, Sandy, or the legendary Mother McQ. (this page)

The only thing Keith did as well as Cobber, if not better, was to be blessed with a beautiful wife and children.

Keith Lethbridge, along with Rusty Christensen, made the long trek across the top end to appear at the Qantas Waltzing Matilda Festival in 1998.

Keith was also one of those poets selected to appear on the Asthma NSW Poet of the Year 2001 Album on which he recited "*The Legend of Mother McQ.*"

DERBY BUSH POETS WA.

Efficiency was the keynote at the Derby Bush Poets fourth annual Breakfast held on Sunday 30th June. So much so that many of the organizing staff missed out on the poetry and entertainment being so busy in other areas.

Over two hundred and fifty adults plus a good number of children were in attendance, with many of the audience members taking advantage of the walk-up presentations.

A competition for original poetry featuring The Year of the Outback attracted twenty entries. A bush poetry trivia contest found some very knowledgeable audience members.

The committee has decided to take on the 2003 Derby Bush Poets' Breakfast, but intends to start preparations 4-6 months in advance instead of 6 weeks. They are hopeful that they may get some grant money to fund

THE LEGEND

OF MOTHER McQ

© Keith Lethbridge Armadale WA

You can reel off the names of the champions of old
The peerless drop-kickers, the brave and the bold,
Clune, Harvey, Les Mumme, to name but a few
But they can't hold a candle to Mother McQ.

We were well into shearing at Minderoo Station,
And Aussie Rules football was sweeping the nation,
On Sundays we aimed for our own recognition,
By fielding a team in the bush competition.

Young Henry, the tar boy, was down in attack,
And Cobber was stationed at centre-half-back.
McCarthy, the presser, was known as a stayer,
While Mildew, the cook, was a back-pocket-player.

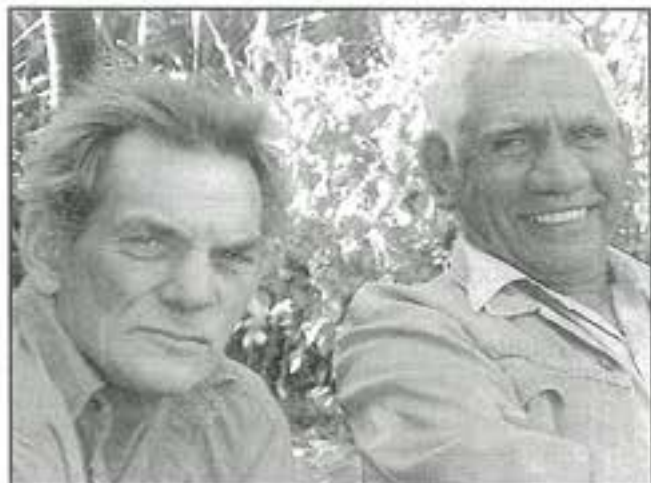
We had no reserves, but we gave it a fling,
And even old Digger was named on a wing.
Such a motley collection, we thought it a shame,
And felt we were certain to lose every game.

But as bad as we were, and conditions adverse,
The other three teams were a flamin' sight worse!
So picture the pleasure, out Minderoo way,
When we found ourselves playing Grand Final Day!

Old Digger was struttin' and starting to brag,
And Cobber was planning to auction the flag,
Then joy turned to gloom and we cancelled the keg,
When Mildew tripped over and fractured his leg.

To start a Grand Final with seventeen men
Was like trying to float the Titanic again.
A new cook was coming on Grand Final Day
And Digger said: "Cripes, I hope he can play!" >>

someone coming in to do some workshops with the local talent. The 2003 Derby Bush Poets' Breakfast will be the weekend of the Derby Cup (horse race) and so we should have a date as soon as the race rounds has been determined for 2003.



Johnny James and Sam Lovell of Derby WA

We prayed and we sweated until one-thirty-five,
When Mildew's replacement was due to arrive.
And then the old wagon came full into view,
And into the sunshine stepped.....Mother McQ.

McCarthy was shattered, and young Henry swore,
And Digger said: "Struth! It's me Mother-in-law!"
But Cobber said: "Boys, this is Mother McQ.
A flamin' good cook, and a strong woman, too."

"Her stews are delicious, her damper first class,
and from seventy yards she can pinpoint a pass!"
Old Mother McQ muttered something ovscene.
"I haven't the faintest idea what yers mean!"

"Don't worry", said Digger, "no time to explain,
we've only got thirty-five minutes to train.
Just whack on this Guernsey, I'll tie back your hair,
Hop into those boots, and those shorts over there."

"Get rid of those earrings and take off that locket,
we're in the Grand Final and you're a back-pocket!"
then Mildew lurched up, with his leg in a cast,
"Just think of it, woman, we need you at last!"

Old Mother McQ stood there gasping and blinkin'
she twigged straight away the boys were fair-dinkum.
She wasn't a quitter, I want you to know,
"Look lively!" she shouted. "Let's give it a go!"

we took to the field at a quarter past two,
and leading us on was old Mother McQ.
Right down the back-pocket, she stood her position,
All panting and sweating and out of condition.

She got in the road of a nuggety rover,
Who lifted an elbow and bundled her over,
She lunged for a tackle but missed by a yard,
She trippedona bootlace and hit the deck hard.

She flew for a mark but the ball wasn't there,
She cursed like a trooper and fought like a bear,
Then, in the last term, with a minute to play,
We were five points behind - the ball came her way.

A lumbering ruck-man came thundering through
And he sneered "You remind me of Mother McQ!
You can't take the blame for your miserable looks,
But you play just as bad as the old buzzard cooks!"

He should have stayed silent . . . if only he knew,
He woke up the demon in old Mother McQ.
She charged in a fury, too angry to speak,
And knocked the big ruck-man right into next week.

She picked up the ball and plunged through the pack,
Not veering, not swerving, and not looking back.
The ump was distracted because of the ruction,
While Mother McQ laid a trail of destruction.

And then, with a drop-kick that nearly brought rain,
She split the big uprights and won us the game!
The crowd was ecstatic . . . they both gave a cheer,
And Digger said: "Mother McQ have a beer!"

And now, when they write of the legends today,
The games won and lost, both at home and away,
The champion wing-men, the half-forward-flanks,
The heroes, the wizards, the crack-pots, the cranks,

The classic grand finals, the narrow defeats,
The red-blooded spectators glued to their seats;
There's one final chapter that's long overdue,
The flag that was won by old Mother McQ!

Poets' Champagne Breakfasts A Brief History



Ron Brown

At 9am on Sunday 24th March 1985 a small group of campers gathered under the trees at the Macarthur Estate Winery, Mt Keira Road, Wilton NSW for a special new event.

Having been enticed from their tents and sleeping bags by the aroma of bacon and eggs frying on the bar-be-que they joined a mixed group of poets and musicians for the inaugural New South Wales Folk Festival

'Poets' Champagne Breakfast'. It is certain however, that poets may have gathered in similar circumstances many times in the past, but this was new event for Folk Festivals in Australia.

As coordinator of the 1985 Wilton Folk Festival on behalf of the New South Wales Folk Federation, Ron Brown of Newcastle, had chosen to sneak in a new

event primarily for the benefit of poets.

Ron's idea of the 'Champagne Breakfast' came from an experience ten years earlier when on a camping trip with his wife Libby and new daughter Nikki together with relatives and friends. Much to Ron's surprise, Libby's father Geoff Meldrum and his mate Joe popped a bottle of Champagne as they scrambled eggs in a frying pan. This had been a family tradition - the joys of being together in the bush had to be toasted on a Sunday morning with some bubbly.

Ron invited Geoff and members of the *Geriatrics Bush Walking Group* to the Wilton Folk Festival thinking it would provide an ideal setting for a Poets' Champagne Breakfast on the Sunday morning.

Starting at 9am the breakfast was not going to interfere with the schedule of workshops and concerts, which normally started after 10am.

While members of the *Geriatric Bush Walking Group* were frying the eggs and bacon the Poets' Breakfast began.

(to page 12)

The rules were detailed to those assembled. You could recite a poem or play a tune on an acoustic instrument but you could not sing.

Angela Phippin, Ciewen Jones, Rob Edgar, Penny Davies, Roger Illot, John Spillane, Ron Brown and others (approx 15 in number) spent the next 90 minutes sharing a mix of verse and music.

Keith McKenry who had been invited to the Festival to take part in Forum on issues relating to the preservation of Australia's Folk Culture arrived just as the Breakfast was ending.

The Illawarra Folk Club, which was one of the key partner groups who assisted in the organization of the Wilton Folk Festival has included a Poets' Breakfast at the 2nd and subsequent Illawarra Folk Festivals held at Jamberoo since 1986 (They count the Wilton Folk Festival as their First).

Poets' Champagne Breakfasts were held at Gulgong and Newcastle Folk Festivals in 1986.

In 1989 Ron met Mark Both at the National Folk Festival held at Melaney. Mark subsequently invited Ron to attend the National Folk Festival at Kuranda near Cairns Q. in 1990.

Ron's suggestion of including a Champagne Breakfast at the festival was adopted by Mark who agreed to schedule it in the programme on the Saturday morning from 8.30 to 10 am.

As shown on the attached flyer used to promote the event interested festival goers were invited "to join our band of invigorated masters of muse for an early morning vocal work-out".

One hundred and thirty people accepted the invitation and thus the Poets' Breakfast was launched onto the National Folk festival stage. The format included a mix of music and poetry as was the case for the 1st Breakfast at Wilton.

Enthused by the success of the Saturday morning Breakfast Ron and other poets circulated notes around the festival publicizing a second impromptu Breakfast to be held on Monday morning. One hundred and sixty people turned out to confirm the appeal of the event to people attending the Festival.

Breakfasts were included in the program for the National Folk Festivals held in Adelaide in 1991 and at the 1992 Festival held in Canberra at the ANU.

Breakfasts were held on the Saturday and Monday mornings. In 1993 the first year the National Folk Festival (Canberra) was held at the Exhibition Centre, the Breakfasts were held in an open area staged under the trellises near the Festival Shop on Saturday and Sunday mornings. The Breakfasts were hosted by Colin Newsome and Ron Brown with Champagne and orange juice provided for a small donation to cover costs. However, the Breakfast was not prominently advertised in the program and only small numbers attended.

In 1994 the Troubadour Wine Bar marquee became

the venue. The linking of the Breakfast to a food outlet has obviously helped to provide a comfortable and sustainable partnership.

The success of the Poets' Breakfasts has been due to the support of those attending. There appears to be a constant stream of people who find that the Breakfasts provide them with an opportunity to participate in the Festivals they are attending and to enjoy the voices of others.

The spread of Poets' Breakfasts as a feature event in Festivals held around Australia has been due to the fundamental demand for Poets to be recognized and included in such events.

"While, I had a part in organizing the Poets' Breakfast at Wilton in 1985 it appears to me that the evolution of such an event was inevitable." says Ron Brown, "In fact a well known Poet, Rowland Robinson who I met when I came to Newcastle in June 1985 told me that he had attended a Poets' Breakfast in Adelaide in the 1960's.

WILTON FOLK FESTIVAL
22nd - 24th March '85
IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE
WILTON CENTENARY
CELEBRATIONS
INITIATED AND COORDINATED BY
THE N.S.W. FOLK FEDERATION
AND
ORGANISED BY
- WILTON PROGRESS ASSOCIATION
- BANGSWOWN FOLK CLUB
- CAMPBELLTOWN FOLK CLUB
- SOUTHERN HILLS MUSIC CO.
- ILLAWARRA FOLK
- SOUTHERN FOLK
SUNDAY 24th.
at the MacARTHUR ESTATE WINERY
9.00am. **POETS' CHAMPAGNE BREAKFAST.**
adjacent to the Court Yard.
Cost \$2. Bacon and Eggs
will be available at the
Court Yard between 8.30am
and 9.30am.
POETS should register
their names with Ron Brown
before 8.00am Sunday 24th.
Teams of three will be
announced before 9.00am
for the Challenge Cup.
11.00am **FOLK FORUM** in the Marquee.
To be chaired by Pam
Gainsford and with special
guests Keith McKenry.

Thanks to the following contributors to this issue: Keith McKenry, Marco Gliori, Neil Carroll, Ellis Campbell, Rod Williams, Ron Brown, Grahame Watt, Leanie Renton, Carol Reffold, Murray Hartin, Marion Fitzgerald, Bob McPhee, Ron Bates, Jim Haynes, Nora Vinson, Jan Morris, Cliff Hathaway, Veronica Weal, Maureen Stonham.

'Rhyme and Reason' -

WORDS -

Most poets, particularly in the early stages, concentrate mainly on the rhyming word at line's end. Certainly this is an important word, as good rhyme is essential to Bush Verse.

Every other word of the poem, however, is also important. Every word helps carry the poem through a logical progression to a suitable conclusion.

Each word should make sense, be of the right stress to fit your chosen pattern, and flow smoothly. Sometimes I change a word two or three times, even though each makes sense and is of the correct stress.

Try not to use the same word too often, particularly in close proximity — unless it is a deliberately repeated phrase or line.

A couple of examples, taken from my own poetry. "*Searing winds singed fragile grass and algae fouled the creek.*" In place of "*fragile*" I might have used, "*flaky*" — "*brittle*" — "*papery*" or "*flimsy*". All those make sense and fit my stress pattern. I thought "*fragile*" and "*brittle*" the two most suitable of these. I chose "*fragile*" because of the preceding three words, "*searing winds singed*".

Brittle seemed to suggest that the grass had long been dead and past being singed by the searing wind. Fragile suggests that the grass was easily and quickly singed by the hot wind. Another example: "*And I tremble at the whining sound that heralds hunters' cry.*" Instead of "*whining*" I MIGHT have used "*shrilling*" — "*droning*" — "*blaring*" or "*screeching*". All make sense and fit the metre pattern.

I thought "*whining*" and "*droning*" the best two. I chose "*WHINING*" because of the danger involved.

This poem tells the story of brumby horses being shot from a helicopter. (Not Sky Of Death ~ printed in a recent issue of ABPA Newsletter, but The Cry Of The Lone Brumby Stallion, second prize-winner in the AWAG competition, Brisbane, 1995).

"*Droning*" might have given an impression of drowsiness, but "*whining*" sounded a danger signal to the horses. Even the first word is important—it helps decide the stress pattern of your poem.

Next issue some poetic terminology.



Ellis Campbell

SUNDAY 26th MAY 2002

On a sunny winter's Sunday in May Donald and Gai Heitzmann invited friends and neighbours to "Langboyd", near Weilmoringle in North Western N.S.W., for a big morning tea for cancer research.

As his Year Of The Outback project, Donald had decided to restore a grave that had been neglected, on the bank of the Birree River, behind his shearees quarters, which are built on the site of the old Langboyd Hotel.

It was a haven for travellers, stockmen and drovers until around the turn of the century. It was later used as a homestead, and burned down in the fifties.

He cemented a new gravestone, restored the old wrought iron fence, and miraculously found the brass plaque which read: *In Memory of John H Barlow - Accidentally killed 31st December 1911.*

Local legend has it that John Barlow was a stockman on Weilmoringle, and after celebrating New Year's Eve at the old Pub, was injured when his horse got tangled up with the hitching rail, and struck him on the head as he was trying to release it.

He was put to bed in one of the rooms, awaiting medical attention, which was fifty miles away in Brewarrina, but passed away during the night.

The restored grave looked a picture as about fifty people gathered round for a memorial service.

Emily Lukas, Grand-daughter of the Heitzmann's, read a prayer of remembrance, and ex-Bre-ite Neil Carroll, from Dubbo delivered a Eulogy:

In this lonely grave, where the dogwoods grow,
Lie the mortal remains of John Barlow.
Just how he died we will never know,
In the year Nineteen Eleven.

Accidental death, so the stories tell,
On this spot that was once Langboyd Hotel.
It was New Year's Day, When they bid farewell
As his soul went up to Heaven.

So let's think back, over ninety years
To his family and friends, gathered round, in tears.
With a silent prayer for pioneers,
And the one who rests below.

Where the bitter winds of time have blown,
On his grave - Forgotten and overgrown.
We dedicate this new gravestone,
To the memory of John Barlow.

After a very pleasant day's socialising and reminiscing, Gai announced that \$1,270.00 would be forwarded to the N.S.W. Cancer Council and an excuse would be found to hold another 'Big Morning Tea' in Two Thousand and Three.

If you want your wife to listen and pay undivided attention to every word you say, talk in your sleep.

TAMWORTH CITY BOWLING CLUB - Poets Breakfasts 2003

One major change in the Bush Poetry Programme at Tamworth next January will be Sam Smyth of Kempsey hosting the Poets Breakfasts at the Tamworth City Bowling Club.

The breakfast sessions will run from 8am to 11am daily during the festival, from 16th January through to the 26th. As part of the Country Music Week celebrations.

Sam Smyth will be presenting a program of light hearted, humorous and well-known traditional Bush Poetry, featuring "The Midcoast Mob", a talented line-up of Bush poets from the coast between Forster and Grafton.

The program will be complemented with guest poets and surprise appearances by some of Australia's best Bush Poets.

Poets who wish to perform in the line-up should contact Sam as soon as possible as the program is filling fast and there will only be limited blackboard places available each day.

Phone 02 6562 6861 - jesamily@bigpond.com.au

ANOTHER MUSTER SUCCESS!

A LARGE team of volunteers swung into action early Monday morning for the dismantling of this year's Toyota National Country Music Muster in Amamoor Creek State Forest Park near Gympie (Qld) after another successful six day event over August 20 to 25.

The weather ran the gauntlet from drought conditions at the beginning of the week to rain showers by the Sunday, but none of this hindered in any way Muster patrons who were reported to have had "one hell of a party and good time" with some of Australia's leading country music entertainers.

Preliminary reports of record ticket pre-sales (up more than 50 percent on the previous year) seem to have resulted in a record attendance. Though actual numbers have not yet been finalised, attendances will maintain the Muster's reputation as the biggest outdoor country music event in Australia.

Major beneficiary of this year's Muster Rural Aid Appeal will be funding for research and campaigns addressing diabetes in the rural community. Last year's Muster raised more than half a million dollars for local community projects so, given this year's success, the result should be even stronger.

(Courtesy CMAA News. Website www.countrymusic.asn.au/)

And . . . As for the Poets. . . .

If venue crowds were anything to go by the Bush Poets *Musterbeenbloodygood* again at the Muster in 2002.

From the moment Gary Fogarty walked on stage at

PALMA ROSA POETS. Another wonderful evening of poetry and music was held on Wednesday 28th August with the presence of Geoff Sharpe (ABL Album Winner 2002) from Nerang, Qld., who kept visitors enthralled with traditional recitations of the works of the old masters.

Appearing with Geoff was the inimitable Gary Lowe of Berkely Vale NSW who kept the audience entertained with examples of his original humorous verse.

Adding a nice balance to the evening was the music of singer/song writer Mark Tempany.

BUSH POETS AT THE EKKA. Once again visitors to the Brisbane exhibition centre were entertained by members of the bush poetry fraternity on a new stage set up for the purpose in the Wool Pavilion.

The organizers are most appreciative of the efforts by the twenty five poets who performed.

The Muster Club on the Tuesday morning, the venues were offering standing room only. Some great new talent lined up with the diversity quite obvious. With Maxine Ireland (83 years) and Cory Jaecocke (11 years) being just two who took up the challenge of giving the campers a few belly laughs. No one was frowning, I can assure you.

Cory went on to win the Poets Brawl with a 'true' poem written on the day about fellow Poet (and the author's uncle) Tony Strauss who undertook a frantic comical search for a mobile phone that he later located, after tearing the campsite apart, attached to his belt.

The Naked Poets did indeed launch their 3rd album '*Buttseriously*' at the Muster before embarking on a week-long tour which took them via Maryborough, to Twin Towns and The Darling Downs. Their show highlighted tracks from the album including Bobby Miller's classic '*Bingo*' and the Shirley Friend hit '*Multi Magic*'.

Six novice performers were selected from the heats of the *Musterbeenbloodygood Poetry Awards* to perform in the Sunday concert. Maureen Carten, Tony Caswell, Jim Tonkin, Brook Wall and Les Mellet were all very entertaining, but Melanie Hall *Musterbeenrealbloodygood*, because she won! Congratulations Mel.

The Muster camp was a beauty this year with special guest Kelly Dixon cracking the whip early with Gary Lowe, while John Best and Jack Drake (The Cattle Dog's Revenge) stoked the fire till the wee hours each night just in case Murray Hartin and Ray Essery decided to arrive back from the Crowbar before sun-rise.

(What's that you ask? Didn't the rain bother us? Sorry, didn't even notice it. . . . Marco Gliori).

THE WEDDING GIFT

"A wonderful competition to mark a wonderful wedding. The day was perfect, the ceremony was a delight and we had so many of our bush poetry friends with us, it seemed like a reunion" - the words of Doug Hutcheson following his marriage to Carol Stratford in Brisbane last month.

The competition of course was 'The Wedding Gift' written verse competition.

Competition judges Flo Hart (Q.) Ellis Campbell (NSW) and Graham Fredriksen (Q.) pored over nearly one hundred entries from all over Australia and New Zealand to choose the winners.

The range and diversity of entries and the quality of the poems submitted has given Doug and Carol great hope that their continuing annual contest "The Stratford Gift" will be as well supported in future years.

Selected competitors in "The Wedding Gift" will be approached shortly for copyright release, to allow their entries to be collated into "The Wedding Gift Anthology" to be published later this year. And the winners are:

First Place: Don Adams, Paraparaumu Beach NZ - *"A Friend For All Seasons"*

Second Place: Ron Stevens, Dubbo NSW - *"Year Of The Outback Poets 2002"*

Third Equal Places: Brian Bell, Blue Mountains NSW - *"Notches On The Door"*; Ken Dean, Marrangaroo NSW - *"Girl Of Mine"*; Brian Bell, Blue Mountains NSW - *"Scrubbing The City"*; Ron Stevens, Dubbo NSW - *"Leading Question"*.

FRIEND FOR ALL SEASONS

© DG (Don) Adams

The sunset strokes the gently lining face
And, through the window, silvers greying hair
As she prepares, in her accustomed place,
The evening meal, the two of us to share.

I sit and watch, immersed in reverie.
I dwell on days together, now and past.
The 'two of us to share', yes, that's the key
Which promises contentment to the last.

We, both of us, know this without parade.
Now one alone would never be complete.
Throughout the years a growing love has made
A life which was, and is for us, replete.

For true love comes not as a blinding flash.
This 'first sight' love can be a dangerous start:
It can so quickly turn from flames to ash.
No. Love at last sight proves the truer heart.

But, musing there, I sense a slight unease
As I look back upon the path we've trailed.
Perhaps my role gave me more liberties?
A wider scope while she was more curtailed?

As I set out upon my life's career,
And found success, fulfilment there at length,
I know it's she who kept the family near;
It's she who gave them love and gave me strength.

My patient partner, listening to my woes,
My selfish moans whenever times were tough.
By far too easy for me to suppose
That what she had and did was full enough.

We both agreed upon our chosen course,
While one provides the other would support.
I don't know if there's ever been remorse
For chances other choices would have brought.

Was there a talent hidden, unexpressed?
A wider challenge that she could have met?
Was I selfish, blind? Should I have guessed
At other goals that she alone could set?

For no complaint has ever passed her lips.
Our home and family, these became her spheres.
Perhaps no other venture could eclipse
The labours, done for love, through all those years.

And now it is too late to change our ways,
We are both set, whatever might have been.
But we are set in love throughout our days.
My doubts, my debt, can but enhance that scene.

Sometimes I wish to write as Browning did;
To pen my love in lines that will not fade.
While in our time my fumbling tongue has hid
The tenderness I felt, but rare portrayed.

And now the twilight years approach us fast;
Our movements slowed and once straight figures
bent.

But when I turn to look towards the past,
I see her near, and I am then content.

The day must come when death will make his play.
For one of us he'll cease his watching brief.
Oh let me be the one who leads the way!
Lest all around should shatter with my grief.

OUTBACK WRITERS CENTRE Inc.

The Outback Writers Centre Inc. Dubbo NSW will be conducting a National Poetry Competition for poems written in any style.

With a maximum of 80 lines, unpublished non-prize-winning poems will be accepted. There is no limit on the number of entries at \$5.00 each with prizes totalling \$200 and \$50. Entry close August 15th 2003.

The Outback Writers Centre Inc. encompasses Local Government Areas of Bogan, Bourke, Brewarrina, Cobar, Coonamble, Dubbo, Narromine, Walgett, Warren and Wellington. (See p. 31).

THE BALLAD OF ROSIE MCGREER

© Carolyn Eldridge-Alfonsetti, North Epping NSW

In a sawdust-floored pub on the edge of the scrub
the mood was uncommonly drear.
You see, without warning the menfolk were mourning
their barmaid named Rosie McGreer.

She had died suddenly of a fierce malady
that for weeks she just could not shake.
Her funeral over, each cocky through drover
had met in the pub for her wake.

Though her girlfriends were few - only one, perhaps
two -
the bar was full (pleased was the owner)
For Rosie'd been lusty, curvaceous and busty,
and many a man had well-known her.

More than twenty five years she had lent them her
ears,
as well as more..... secretive parts.
Combined with her passion, the utmost discretion
had earned her a place in their hearts.

Pint-jugs soon collected each man then reflected
in silence whilst drowning his beer,
all comrades together, with grief as a tether,
held tight with a small knot of fear.

For today all would hear what their own Rosie, dear,
in sixteen long years had told none.
The name she'd concealed would quite soon be
revealed:
The man who had fathered her son!

Through the years she had said, not until she was
dead,
would she quash the town's long speculation.
Her lawyer would then make a quick trip to her wake
to deliver the grand revelation.

Now, no man really knew if his own rendezvous
had resulted in young Jack McGreer -
Rosie's great pride and joy - now a tall, strapping boy
who had thrice been the dux of his year.

Richly blessed with good looks and a passion for
books, Jack was strong, kind-hearted and fearless.
He could out shear most men, only swore now and
then (As far as lads went, he was peerless).

Long tormented by guilt that the young man well-built
may have sprung from a seed that they'd sown,
men had looked, hat to shoe, for a genetic clue
as to whether the boy was their own.

Matty Gore thought he saw in the boy's chiselled jaw
his own square-set, deeply cleft chin.
While Doug Frazer would stare at Jack's thick, curly
hair
—same gold as the rest of his kin.

Fred Arnold, a drover who'd often slept over
in Rosies' bed up the pub's stair,
was certain the boy's eyes - clear blue as drought skies,
were due to the blood they must share.

Many more thought they saw the sure signs of their
spore
in the way the youth walked, talked or laughed.
Though most wives would kill 'em, the thought came to
thrill 'em
that such a fine lad was their craft.

At a quarter to four there appeared at the door a man
looking parched from a journey.
A tall, smart-suited bloke with a look of the smoke;
he could only be one - the Attorney.

Ev'ry bloke gulped his last with a heart beating fast
as the man gave a brief introduction:
"I act for Miss McGreer. You all know why I'm here -
so I will not delay my instruction."

There was hardly a sound as the lawyer looked 'round
before clearing his throat nervously.
"Young Jack McGreer's father is John Henry Carver.
For those who don't know . . . I am he."

Well! None had suspected a lawyer, respected,
to have fathered their town's golden lad.
Yet, on thinking, it seemed right - a boy who was bright
surely had to have had a smart dad.

Jack's fine brain, though, had come from his wily old
mum
who'd smartly held tight to her knowledge.
Though most not yet knew it, the room had seen to it
her son could afford a good college.

For as each man had thought, as the father, he ought to
contribute to young Jack's upkeep.
Unknown to each other, they had all sent his mother
anonymous money each week!

So, remember this tale if you're tempted to sail into bed
with a busty young treasure.
In her own cunning way, she might get you to pay for
far more than ten minutes of pleasure.

WHERE IS OUR HEART-AND SOUL?

(C) Roderick Williarns. September 2001.

I write of the many spirit's forged
in the fiery heat outback -
From the sweat and grind of shearing sheds
and the toilers white and black.
Of the drovers on the long stock-routes
from the gulf to Castlemaine -
In stifling heat at the 'Back-o-Bourke'
on the red-hot sandy plain.

(Where is Our Heart and Soul?)

Men tramped this land for a million miles
from Stawell to Julia Creek –
They slaved on stations and in the sheds
with a future always bleak.
Their footprints covered the vast wide land
as they trudged from dawn till night –
Many would bleach and their only friend
was the dancing Min-Min light.

And with them out on the distant track
by the miles of the steel rails –
Sleepers laid through the blistering days
you listen, you'll hear the tales.
The songs and yams of the men who drove
the spikes, to a rhythmic beat –
Sing out from across the Nullabor
and the plains incessant heat.

The selectors poor - who fought the odds
were quite often forced to roam –
Droving or shearing, looking for work
while wives and the kids stayed home.
With hearts wrung out from the salty tears
in the heat, each sweat-drowned night –
Loneliness being the constant curse
these women would have to fight.

Lying alone in a hostile world
and wondering why the pain
would never leave, as it came in waves
again, again and again.
Deprived of joys and a woman's needs
as the skin grows cracked and dry –
Her dreams are sucked in a swirling haze
to the dusty red-brown sky.

I write of the tribesmen tall and black
and a story that's half told –
They worked for nothing but flour and beef
while the Barons banked their gold.
From the centre through to Kimberly
they were backbone of each run –
They spent their lives in lone stock camps
in 'The Red land of The Sun'.

And the Afghans driving camel trains
linked the north to south through trade –
They, with horse and bullock teams
share the sacrifices made.
With hard-worked stock, linking up
the land in a constant moving trail –
These were the trains and planes of the past
loaded up with goods and mail.

These people sailed from a world away
to begin their lives again –
Different races sharing together
their dreams with the hope and pain.
It was our fathers who took the land

possessed by an ancient race –
By the law of God they claimed the right
to stay and to own the place.

But now I look at our selfish world
and it makes me feel ashamed –
As millions of people cry for help
with the children starved or maimed.
And we are too bloody miserable
to take in the refugees –
That come for a better way of life
as we did, across the seas.

We are overdue for taking stock
of the way we see ourselves –
In opening up our selfish hearts
and cleaning, our dirty shelves.
To take our place in the scheme of things;
We are specks of dust in time –
To ignore these human tragedies
is a heinous bloody crime.

I will fill my glass up once again
a toast to the stout heads all –
As hurdles ahead grow high with time,
I am bound to crash and fall.
But the bruising or the falls I take
or my drunken tearful plea –
is nothing compared to cries of kids
that drown in the southern sea.

THE PASSING OF SPINIFEX JACK

Mike Kaczmarowski
Collinsville Q. 1958

I walked the streets of Isa
The dust upon my shoes,
They said I was a drunkard
A victim of the booze.

The bonus has been fallin'
The monied days are done,
And I hear the canefields callin'
To me, their wandering son.

They'll call to me forever
Till sun and moon do meet,
For I'll die in this minin' city
From grog and searing heat.

The streets are long and dusty
And trees are very few,
But the beer flows on regardless
In this town of foaming brew.

The S.P. lads are busy
On this day of the local meet,
And fools like me who've
known them
End up, broken in the street.

'BRE'

The abbreviation of place names is a familiar trait amongst Australians, perhaps one of the shortest being 'Bre' for Brewarrina in Northern New South Wales.

Many stories have come out of the Brewarrina area with such noted authors as Keith Garvey and his Tales of Uncle Harry.

Well known in these pages is Neil 'Hipshot' Carroll who spent the 'best twenty years of his life in the fifties and sixties at Bre. A long time resident of Dubbo, Neil has penned lots of little ditties and well metered poems which have appeared on these pages.

(Now calm down Watty, we know 'Ky' for Kyabram is shorter than 'Bre'. Save a stamp mate, unless you have some others up your sleeve - any other takes?)



CHANGE OF HEART

© Wilbur G Howcroft - Culgoa V.

I watched her, graceful as a doe,
Amid the flowers rare
And envied those she chose to pluck
To twine into her hair.
Her fragile charm and loveliness
Went to my head like wine
And how I yearned with all my heart
That I could make her mine.
Years later, when I chanced to pass
And hear the language hot
She bellowed at her unwashed kids
I thanked the Lord I'd not!

Nightfall finds me sleepin'
At the back of the big Top Pub,
And as I lay in a stupor
Stray dogs against me rub.

Tomorrow they will find me
And shake their heads and sigh
"Looks like an 'empty' fell on him
- What a helluva a way to die!"

JUST A SMALL RED CATTLE PUP

© Norma Jeffries

Just a small red cattle pup
Still unsteady on her feet
Left by a passing drover
Making my young life complete.

Together we were happy
This young pup and shy bush child
Although my parents scolded
I suspect they often smiled.

Her tail was rather stumpy
On her face a constant grin
A little ball of mischief
And I chose to call her Lyn.

The years went by so swiftly
And our playtime turned to chores
Yet still our friendship deepened
Like a song that gently soars.

Each day when work was ended
At the setting of the sun
She'd often guard the horses
When her daily chores were done.

She formed a sort of pattern
And each night we'd find her there
A self-appointed minder
Of my father's big bay mare.

She loved that horse with passion
Even under threat of strife
A lasting fascination
That would later, cost her life.

It happened late one evening
As the sinking sun grew pale
We went to catch our horses
To collect the weekly mail.
The horse I chose to bridle
Was a flighty chestnut mare
Still young, just barely broken
How I wish I'd left her there.

As I approached the filly
She began to prance about
Lyn came to watch proceedings
Feeling curious, no doubt.

All over in an instant
Like a sudden blinding flash
Lyn crushed beneath the filly
As she made a reckless dash.

So many hearts were broken
As her life ebbed to an end
Much more than just a work dog
She'd become a family friend.

Poets on the Tweed - Helps 'Kids in Need'

A crowd of about 200 (down a hundred on last year) braved the foul weather on Sunday 25th August for the Bush Poets Brekkie and competition to aid 'Kids in Need' at the Tweed Heads Civic Centre.

They listened spellbound, and at other times doubled up with laughter as the Bush Poets performed their chosen pieces.

Poets and audience alike travelled from Port MacQuarie in the south and from areas to the north of Brisbane for this one very special morning of the year.

The standard of poets was exceptionally high - these words from guest performance Bush Poet Geoff Sharp who travelled down from Binna Burra the help the 'Kids in Need'.

The audience was left scratching their heads deciding over purpose designed voting sheets, which were as close as possible to the Australian Bush Poets Association guidelines.

The barbeque brekkie cooked and served by members of the 'Kids in Need' Association was very well received.

Prizes were donated by the Poets and Writers on the Tweed and first prize of \$200 went to June Jones of Banora along with a hand carved trophy. Close behind in second place was Jean Watson from Nerang taking home a nice trophy and \$100.

'Kids in Need' at the Tweed and the Gold Coast will benefit to the tune of \$700.00

The competition convener was Lorraine Richards from Poets and Writers on the Tweed.



Give a man a fish
and he will eat for
a day.
Teach him how to
fish, and he will
sit in a boat &
drink beer all day.



FROGS AND DOGS AND KIDS

Poet Roderick Williams of Oxley Island owes much of the inspiration gained for his new book, *Frogs and Dogs and Kids*, to his nine-year-old blue cattle dog, Jessie.

The book has a wide range of appeal to readers young and not so young with his picture-painting words complimented by the pencil drawings of Sophie Glascott, making the book a treasure for all ages.

Rod's book was written chiefly with primary children in mind with a special blessing for all children in this delightful publication.

'I hope that you all grow up knowing trust and love and friendship, so

If dogs do have a heaven
Please God, handle her with care
I have no reservations
That my little friend is there.

I see her racing gamely
As she rounds the cattle up
Off somewhere in the distance
Just a small red cattle pup.

you can be strong and overcome suspicion, hate, prejudice and fear,' Rod writes to his young readers.

'May you learn to share with each other, no matter what your country, race, colour or beliefs may be'.

Frogs and Dogs and Kids is available at \$16.25 posted from Rod Williams 40 Templetons Lane Oxley Island 2430 (Ph. 02 6553 2565)

Auctioneer and Bush Poet, Malcolm Tink of Dubbo NSW was a top class rugby league player and referee in his heyday, and a few big hits and the occasional broken nose left him with a bad respiratory problem.

After major reconstruction at RPA recently he received this 'get well' message from one of his poetical mates at home:

We thought that he was playing jokes;
when Malcolm called to see the folks;
and tell us he was off the smokes.
We couldn't comprehend it.

'Me poor old honkers bugged,
Mate;
me sinuses are in a state;
the Doctors want to operate . . .
. . . They reckon they can mend it.'

So as he lay in sweet repose,
with hammer, chisel, suction hose,
they hacked away at Malcolm's
nose,
like bloody oxy-welders.

When he awoke with groans and snores,
his old proboscis packed with gauze,
he grabbed a mirror .. "Holy Wars!!
John Elliot, from Elders."

Who made a million quid for sure,
and we all hope and pray, with your
new voice, you'll make much more
when auctioning and sellin'.

But, jokes aside, we'd like to send,
best wishes to a dear old friend,
who must be feeling round the bend,
away from home. . . and Helen.

Best of luck, old mate, 'Hipshot'.

TIME OUT:

Dr. Willis finished examining Martha and went into the hallway to talk to her husband Bill.

"I don't want to alarm you," he said to Bill, "but I don't like the way your wife looks at all."

"Me neither, Doc." replied Bill. "But she's a great cook and real good with the kids."

NATIONAL CHERRY FESTIVAL Young, NSW - Cherry Capital of Australia

The 2002 Young Cherry Festival runs over two weekends from Friday 29th to Sunday 1st December and then from Friday 6th December to Sunday 8th December.



At this time of the year the thriving township celebrates not only the cherry harvest but also the many sporting, cultural and business activities that help to make Young the pride of the South West Slopes of NSW.

Many visitors take the opportunity to come and pick their own cherries and all are welcome. The Rotary Club of Young is a proud supporter of the Cherry Festival.

The Young Livestock and Estate Agents have combined to sponsor the festivals inaugural Bush Poetry event with a \$1,200 Open Performance Bush Poetry competition to be held on Friday December 6th at 7pm at the Young Golf Club.

Prizemoney of \$1000 (divided \$500, \$200 and 3x\$100) will go to the adjudicated best five on the night - judges taking into consideration merit for material chosen and performance. Both traditional and original poems are most welcome.

The 5 major prize winners are expected to perform at one of the breakfasts on Saturday and Sunday mornings, the 7th and 8th Dec. which will be open to all comers starting at 8.30am. Two \$100 encouragement awards will be given to **Novices** at these breakfasts - being any bush poet who has not placed in a bush poetry competition anywhere.

Entries close on November 6th with a fee of \$10 and may be made by phoning Greg Broderick on 6382 3883 during working hours. Admission to this event is \$8 for adults and \$5 for pensioners and children under 16years; tickets available at the Young Visitors' Centre 6382 3394 or at the door.

Visitors to Young during the Cherry Festival will find more than their share of local attractions, plenty to keep them busy during their stay. Young's history, the subject of various books, makes fascinating reading, covering the era of pioneering, gold discoveries, bushrangers, through to the development of a rapidly progressing town.

The recognised settlement area of NSW in 1826 reached only as far as Yass and Boorowa, when James White ventured into the area now known as Young. James befriended the local aborigines, and their leader, Cobborn Jackie, pointed out a site where water was plentiful at nearby Sandy Creek, now known as Burrangong Creek and James White set about establishing Burrangong Station. White returned to Sydney, paying £10 for squatters rights of Burrangong, consisting of 100 square miles.

The site where Young now stands consisted of a well-sheltered valley with good water and it was here that White built sheep yards and a shepherds' hut. The area was reserved for lambing ewes, hence the name "Lambing Flat". The beautiful valley remained as such for 34 years until in 1860, White's nephew Dennis Regan and Alexander the Yankee found gold at a spot in the creek at the rear of our present-day Museum. Within 12 months, some 20,000 miners were busily engaged, extracting the precious metal from the earth. Amongst them were some 2,000 Chinese.

The white miners deeply resented the Chinese and in January 1861, riots began with the Chinese being driven from the fields time and time again. As a result of the riots at Lambing Flat, the Chinese Immigration Restriction Act was passed by Parliament in November 1861, the forerunner of the White Australia Policy eventually passed through Parliament upon Federation in 1901.

Origin of the Poets Dinners/ Breakfasts/Debates

by Keith McKenry

Poets' Dinner

The first Poets' Dinner was held at the National Folk Festival in Adelaide in 1983. The venue was the Robin Hood Hotel. To the best of my knowledge this was the first come-all-ye feature event specifically for poets and reciters at any National Folk Festival. It may indeed have been the first such event at any Australian folk festival or, for that matter, country music festival.

Up until that time there had been occasional poetry workshops at the National (I gave my first at the Alice Springs National in 1980, and there were others before me), and very rarely the odd reciter/poet had graced the concert stage, but there had never been a dedicated event for devotees of the spoken word to get together and celebrate. The first Poets' Dinner changed all that, and was a watershed in raising the status of poetry in the folk scene.

These days, the spoken word is a major part of the National Folk Festival program. We have poetry and storytelling concerts, and concerts mixing spoken word and music. Many workshops feature poetry, and we have had several poets as international feature performers.

I organised and compered the inaugural Poets' Dinner at the invitation of Rob Charlton. Rob, a fine bush poet, had seen me at the previous year's National in Sydney perform his poem "Bloody Shielas" in the Concert Hall of the Sydney Opera House. This prompted him, he explained to me later, to invite me to organise a Poets' Dinner for the Adelaide National, where he was one of the key organisers.

For this inaugural Dinner in 1983 I managed to capture the original *McArthur's Fart* in a giant Vegemite Bottle. Safely sealed with superglue, it became the perpetual trophy at the Dinners, and teams of participants at the Dinner competed annually for the honour of being Keeper of the Fart for the coming year. The Fart was kept safe, and returned without fail each year.

I also introduced at the first Dinner an Award for the best individual recitation of the evening. Now known as the Reciter's Award, it too has been offered continuously since 1983. The 2000 Keeper of the Fart, Roger Montgomery from Perth, returned it with the Vegemite Bottle encased in a delightful jarrah and silky oak frame. It now resembles an hourglass without the waist, and is a fitting prize indeed!

The first year the individual award was a "Poet's Chalice", a pottery goblet which was won by Kel Watkins. Rob Charlton was the judge. I dubbed Kel in to comper the second Dinner, in Canberra in 1984, and

for this Dinner he produced a Reciter's Award Plaque. Each winner gets to keep the plaque for a year, and to have their name engraved on it (at their own expense). These days they also have the honour (?) of being the next year's Judge, an honour no winner has yet declined.

By the mid-1990s the list of names was outgrowing the plaque, and the 1996 winner, Terry Gleeson fashioned a beautiful, and larger award out of Ironbark. Now known as the "Terry" this award contains in its base the original plaque.

The winners of the Reciter's Award have been:

1983 Kel Watkins	1995 Simon Campbell
1984 Keith McKenry	1996 Terry Gleeson
1985 John Dengate	1997
1986 Jim Smith	Warren 'Arch' Bishop
1987 David Berman	1998 Mark Feldman
1988 Denise Nethercote	1999
1989 Mervyn Langford	Richard 'Skreitch' Leitch
1990 Patricia Gillis	2000 Vivienne Sawyer
1991 Corry de Haas	2001 Col Wilson
1992 Dennis O'Keefe	'Blue the Shearer'
1993 Colin Newsome	2002 Terry Regan
1994 Leigh Brown	

The Fart and the Reciter's Awards are now 20 years old, and are by far the longest-standing awards in the Australian folk scene.

The Poets' Dinner formula remained more-or-less constant. Tickets would be sold in advance (to pay for the meal) with numbers limited to around 45 to ensure all who wished would have an opportunity to recite during the evening. The room would be arranged in tables of 6 to 8, and each table would be a team competing for the Fart. The comper would draw a subject at random from a hat, and the team whose turn it was would be required to provide, within 30 seconds, someone to recite from memory a poem on the subject. (Often the yarn linking the poem to the subject would be more entertaining than the poem itself!)

The Poets' Dinners were an annual feature at the National for thirteen years, until 1995. We decided then it was time for a change. Poets' Breakfasts were now also established on Festival programs, and in 1996 we transferred the Reciter's Award to the Breakfasts, and instituted a new evening feature poetry event, the World Poetry Debate!

Poets' Breakfast

I'm not certain when the Poets' Breakfasts started in Australia. My understanding is that the first Poets' Breakfasts were initiated in NSW in the folk scene in the mid-1980s. My first record of attending a poets' breakfast is in March 1985, at the Wilton Folk Festival in NSW, and I recall being told they had started a year or so before that. The key person in the establishment of the Breakfasts was, to my understanding, Ron

Brown of Newcastle. Ron continues to be a bundle of organizing energy, and these days is the key figure in the Hunter River bush poetry scene.

The Poets' Breakfasts grew quickly in popularity, providing a come-all-ye forum for reciters and poets, predominantly *bush* poets.

I'm not certain when the Poets' Breakfasts made the transition to the country music scene but I suspect this must have been in the late 1980s. I'm aware that Jim Haynes was involved some years in running Poets' Breakfasts at the Illawarra Folk Festival in Jamberoo, and it's my understanding that he took the concept across to the country scene at Tamworth, and also to the commercial end of the folk scene at Port Fairy.

Significantly, when the Breakfasts made the transition to the country music scene they changed character. In the folk festival environment they had always provided the reciters' equivalent of the musicians' session bar, and everyone was welcome to take their turn. When however they took root in the country music scene the very different ambience of that scene brought about a major change in the Breakfast concept. They largely ceased to be an event where all were welcome to take their turn irrespective of experience or performance 'quality' and became instead showcase events for a small invited group of established poets. As showcase events they became very popular at country music festivals, and remain so.

In the folk scene the Breakfasts largely have retained their come-all-ye character (Port Fairy may be the exception). There has been at least one Poets' Breakfast at the National Folk Festival every year since Adelaide in 1991. That year the Breakfast co-ordinator, not surprisingly, was Newcastle's tireless Ron Brown.

The Breakfasts have been held daily at the National since 1994. In 1996, with the demise of the Poets' Dinner, the Breakfasts inherited the prestigious Reciter's Award. The award notwithstanding, the Breakfasts at the National remain steadfastly non-competitive and inclusive, and a strict first-in-first-served principle applies. There is no restriction on performance style, and you are not allowed to read a poem unless you wrote it. (This rule is a legacy from a disaster one year when a kilted Scot stood up with a book of Robert Burns and proceeded to attempt to read aloud the entirety of Tam O'Shanter). We also have been obliged to impose a time limit of 6 minutes per performer, to keep the stage moving. The Breakfasts attract appreciative crowds, and often there are more reciters wishing to perform than can be fitted into the daily two hour session.

(I have written the above notes about the Breakfasts from memory, and can't guarantee their accuracy. The persons best placed to correct me and/or to fill in the gaps would be Ron Brown and Jim Haynes.)

World Poetry Debate

In 1996, tiring of the hassle of organising tickets for the Poets' Dinner, and of fending off persons who refused to book and then demanded at zero notice a seat (and a meal), I decided to kill off the Dinners before they killed me. We needed however a showcase evening poetry event, and so I programmed a World Poetry Debate, with the *Fart* as the winner's prize.

The Debate was an immediate success. For the first three years we held it in a venue that could hold 200 people, and they were queuing up for over an hour to get in, with the unlucky late arrivals creating a fire hazard in the stairwells and nearby corridors. So we moved it to a venue which would hold 400 plus – and still people were turned away. So in the end the Festival organisers had to admit defeat and move us to the prime spot at the Festival, the main stage (a venue which holds 2000 people) on Sunday evening. There we have been now for two years, and have filled the venue both times!

It has been a long journey from the 34 intrepid souls who squeezed into the alcove at Adelaide's Robin Hood Hotel for the first Poets' Dinner in 1983 to the 2000+ who jammed in to be part of the World Poetry Debate at the National in 2002, but it has been great fun. I would not have missed it for quids.

Keith McKenry

THE POETS BRAWL by Marco Gliori.

Q. How was the Poets Brawl introduced to the Bush Poetry Scene.

A. Like The Poets Breakfasts... via the Folk Festivals.

I had visited the Melbourne Poetry Festival and entered a 'fun' competition called 'The One Minute Poetry Cup' in 1991 which was run in a very similar fashion to 'The Poets Brawl' we now all know so well.

Upon my return, and as the then co-ordinator of the Poets at the Maleny Folk Festival I approached Bill Hauritz with the concept and he thought it was a great idea.

I wanted a unique name to suit the 'Pub Atmosphere' of the event and thus was born 'The Poets Brawl'.

The name was first used by the Maleny Folk Festival in '92 and has since been adopted by festivals all around Australia.

Some of the Poets who attended that very first brawl in the Union tent at Maleny were Denis Kevans, Charlie Marshall, Keith McKenry, Campbell Irving and Mark Both and it was compered by yours truly.

**These are the facts of the matter
your honour! We bloody well stole
it! Marco Gliori.**



WHIPTSTICK and THE PATCHWORK POET in the BIG SMOKE A first for Melbourne!!

Peter "Whipstick" Worthington and Carol Reffold – the Patchwork Poet are putting on a Bush Poetry show at Chapel off Chapel, in Prahran (An inner city Melbourne Suburb).

They will bring some great Traditional, Contemporary, Original and downright Larrikin Australian Bush Verse for a four week season during Melbourne's "Fringe" festival where traditionally, innovative theatrical experiences are the norm.

Tell your friends in Melbourne that if they wonder why bush poetry is becoming so popular, and can't get to Tamworth to find out, go along and support these two.

Dates are Thursdays, Friday, Saturdays and Sundays, September 24th through to October 20th. Call Carol for further information. 03 9740 4868.

BUSH POETS OF AUSTRALIA CHANGES FOR TAMWORTH

Bush Poets of Australia has moved! Plans are now well under way for the introduction of an exciting new Bush Poetry venue during the 10 days of Tamworth Country Music Festival, 16th – 26th January, 2003.

At the helm of this innovative venture will be Carol Reffold who coordinated the 45 bush poetry shows at Tamworth City Bowling Club earlier this year.

Because of the hefty rent increases required by the TCBC, Carol has found the perfect new venue for the shows at the Anglican Church Property in Carthage Street, located on the other side of the railway line. It's only a stones throw away from the "Imperial" Hotel and Tamworth CBD with ample, unrestricted, parking spaces.

Next year's plans include children's performance competitions, two charity concerts for the Royal Flying Doctor Service and Salvation Army and poets breakfasts featuring a different poet host each day.

Plans also include daily concerts at 10:30 am, 1pm and 4pm with special famous performance poets or a distinctive theme, and the inclusion of the ever popular workshops in writing and performing.

Evening shows commencing at 7pm will take various forms including theatre restaurants, campfires, Gospel song and poetry show and a performance competition with fabulous prizes, which will be run along similar lines to that which runs at the very popular Imperial Hotel.

There will also be a special poets' ecumenical service with poets encouraged to participate and take significant roles.

On the final Saturday of celebrations, the only events

scheduled during the day will be the poets breakfast and brawl from 8 – 10am, leaving poets and groupies free to attend the popular street parade, competition finals at the Imperial Hotel and the ABPA AGM. An evening show will be staged.

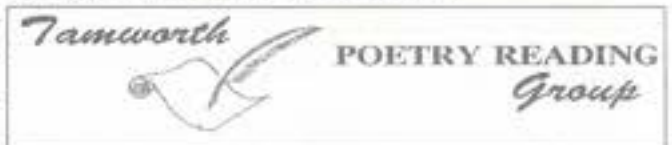
Sunday morning will see a breakfast and sharing (reading allowed) (or should that be spelled 'aloud?') of new works.

A final breakfast plus a morning concert is planned for Monday, 27th January, to say goodbye and share memories of another great session of bush poetry in Tamworth.

Carol is keen to contact poets who may wish to submit their performance portfolio with the view to invitations being issued to perform at the venue.

If you would like to be part of this comprehensive festival of bush verse, please submit your details (availability and repertoire) to Carol to enable you to be included into some of the most fantastic poetry shows at Tamworth 2003.

Her contact details are Carol Reffold, 287 Gap Road, Sunbury 3429, or ph (03) 9740 4868 or mobile, 0413 080 095 or please e-mail her at patchwork-poet@hotmail.com for further details.



THE BLACKENED BILLY VERSE COMPETITION 2003

One of Australia's most prestigious written verse competitions is in the famous Blackened Billy Verse Competition, with the winner being announced on the final Saturday of the Tamworth Country Music Festival, at the Imperial Hotel.

Entries for this competition are judged on submitted verse and must meet the organizers by 30th November 2002.

Entry forms are available from Maureen Quickenden, PO Box 1164 Tamworth NSW 2340 - please send a stamped self addressed envelope.

The winner will be announced at the Imperial Hotel on Saturday 25th January 2003, and will receive the prestigious Blackened Billy Trophy, designed and crafted by well-known ceramic artist Fred Hillier, along with \$300 cash and a certificate.

This competition is supported by AM Printing.

IMPERIAL HOTEL

The Country Energy Tamworth Bush Poetry Competition will be held at the Imperial Hotel, Tamworth on January 22-25, 2003.

For entry forms or information, please send SSAE to Jan Morris at PO Box W1, West Tamworth or phone 02 6765 9478.

A TRIFLE

© Janice Downes Port MacQuarie NSW

A kiss he took and a backward look,
And her heart grew suddenly lighter,
A trifle you say to colour a day,
But the dull grey morn seemed brighter.
For hearts are such that a tender touch,
can awaken a look of gladness.
A small bright thing can make us sing,
But a frown can check our gladness.

The brightest ray along the way,
Is the little act of kindness,
And the keenest thing,
Some thoughtless thing,
Done in a moment of blindness.
We gladly face life, in a home where strife,
No foothold can discover,
And, be lovers still, if we only will,
When youths bright days are over.

Sharp as swords, cut unkind words,
That are far beyond recalling,
When a face lies hid,
'neath a coffin lid,
And bitter tears are falling.
We fain would give the life we live,
To undo our idle scorning,
So let us not miss,
The smile and the kiss,
As we part in the light of the morning.

Miracle House

© Janine Haig - Eulo Q.



I believe in miracles -
they happen every day,
My home is full of magic
despite the disarray -
Or maybe that's the reason
for magical excess,
The miracles occur because
I live in such a mess.
A pile of dirty clothing
upon the bedroom floor -
I leave it long enough,
and those grubby things I wore
Just head out to the laundry,
wash themselves and then
Hang out on the clothesline
'til they fold themselves again.
My bed has such a complex,
insists on being neat,
And can't abide a crooked quilt
or wrinkled bottom sheet,
So if I leave it long enough
my bed will make itself,

Another piece of magic from
the little Household Elf.
No matter where I leave it,
my towel will find its way
Back into the bathroom -
it happens every day!
So many little miracles
happen in my home,
Is it fairies? Is it angels?
Or perhaps a garden gnome?
And it really is amazing...
how I can take a drink
Down into the lounge-room,
yet the glass is in the sink
The next time that I want it:
Strange and yet it's true,
I know I don't return it -
A miracle for you!
So I don't know why Mum stresses
when things are not quite right,

MIRROR IMAGE

© June Redmond - Blacktown NSW

My mirror looked at me and screamed, my bathroom scales agreed.
They seemed to shout in unison, "It's exercise you need"
I signed for a beginner class. That shouldn't be too hard.
A week or two would do it. That'd shift a bit of lard.

An attendant weighed me in, she handed me a chart
"Ten kilos over-weight!" she said, I think I knew that part.
She led me to a room, where the class was to begin,
"You come back each week dear, we'll have you nice and trim."
"Mesh stockings and a leotard! That could set the mind to boggle!"
"It's ladies only dear." She said, "There's no one here to gogle."
I squeezed my bulges into them, but didn't feel too bad,
When I had a chance to see, the shapes the others had.

Floppy bottoms, flabby bellies, big legs and chests too flat.
I thought, "My fat's distributed, more evenly than that,"
Now she showed us what to do, and music filled the air.
She gave us our instructions, with grace and style and flair.

Our respective body parts went flopping every where!
Legs, bottoms, boobs and bellies, bouncing through the air.
The floor began vibrating as we all jumped around,
It shook to it's foundations, I hoped that they were sound.

Like a pod of baby whales, we rolled around the floor
She put us through our paces, till we could take no more.
"I'll see you all next week." she said, when the class was done
"Don't you all feel better and wasn't that great fun?"

We helped each other off the floor, our muscles screamed with pain.
That had stirred the circulation, and pulverized the brain.
I wasn't feeling better, to me, pain isn't fun
She won't be seeing me again my exercise is done

I'm off to smash that mirror, but just in case that fails.
I'm going out to buy an axe, and kill those- rotten scales!

Everything will be okay -
there is no need to fight.
But it's only when my Mum is home
that miracles occur,
Perhaps it's not the house.....
Maybe it has to do with her.

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THE BIG BANG OF BUSH POETRY

Like the Big Bang that supposedly created the universe, the catalyst for the explosion that set the current popularity of bush poetry ablaze lies steeped in mystery. But there is good reason to believe that the spark that began it all touched off in Tamworth.

Way back in 1976, the Tamworth Adult Learning Group sponsored a Poetry Reading Group and thus commenced the process that was to play a big part in reinstating bush poetry as a popular vehicle for capturing the social history of country Australia.

In the beginning, the Big Bang could well have been a fizzer. The Poetry Reading Group's first attempt to present bush poetry during Tamworth's Country Music Festival could hardly have been regarded as a success, with the Longyard people saying "Don't call us, we'll call you"! That was in 1987.

The following year the group persisted, presenting their new creation, the Tamworth Bush Poetry Competition, from the carpark at Kentucky Fried Chicken. But the spark finally ignited, when the competition found its home, which it still has to this day, in the Imperial Hotel.

Although the original aim of the Tamworth Poetry Reading Group was to re-ignite an interest in traditional bush poetry, an "original" section was created in the competition to encourage people to write their own "bush poetry". And this was the spark that set off the Big Bang!

The first winner of the Original Section at the Imperial in 1989 was Marion Fitzgerald, whose quirky look at farm life set the stage for a renaissance of interpretations of the Australian way of life; the humour, the pathos, the drama of the experience of being Australian in this sunburnt country which never allows us quite to be in charge.

Suddenly people, such as Marco Gliori, Jim Haynes, Murray Hartin, Bobby Miller, Ray Essery, Gary Fogarty, Charlee Marshall, and many, many more burst upon the scene and audiences clamoured for more. Jim Haynes started up the famous Bush Poets' Breakfasts at the Longyard to showcase the talents of the up and coming poets. Now many of them have their own shows, both in Tamworth and all around the country. There wouldn't be a weekend go by where there wasn't a Bush Poetry Competition or concert being held somewhere in Australia, such is its popularity and success.

And the original aim of the Tamworth Poetry Reading Group to promote the traditional poets like Lawson, Paterson and their ilk? Traditional sections still form a major part of these performances and com-

petitions and are always popular. The tradition lives on.

Written competitions have also become popular and here, too, the Tamworth Poetry Reading Group has led the way with its Blackened Billy Verse Competition started in 1990. This competition now attracts hundreds of entries. And the future for the Tamworth Bush Poetry Competition looks good too. The winners of yesteryear now offer their support as guest comperes and the competition has had the good fortune to secure the generous sponsorship of Country Energy.

The Tamworth Poetry Reading Group is proud of the part it has played, and continues to play, in the promotion of bush poetry, and in providing vehicles for the established poets, and up and coming poets who are there in the wings, ready to keep the bush poetry tradition going on and on.

Tamworth, and the Imperial Hotel, can truly claim to be the "Home of Bush Poetry".

Jan Morris and Cliff Hathway

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Mate, the inaugural Bush Poetry competition at the Tamworth CM Festival was in 1987 and was run by the Tamworth Poetry Reading Group and the brainchild of Dan Byrnes.

I was living in Tamworth at the time and I heard Ted Egan being interviewed on Radio 2TM and he said there were some good performances but also some fairly ordinary efforts as well.

I went out armed with a poem I'd written about the drought in 1983, 'Rural Facts', but on arrival was told I needed two poems to enter.

I also had in my wallet a bit of a reunion poem called 'Back to Forster' so encouraged by a mate's sister nervously entered and performed the two pieces on the back of a semi-trailer in front of the Longyard Hotel balcony.

Somehow I won through to the final on the Sunday so duly celebrated on the Saturday night with a few mates who had come up to stay at my place for the weekend.

Got up at midday, the final was at 4pm, I had four lines written of The Ballad of Kev Koala and Ringtail Pete, managed to finish it, zipped out to The Longyard where the final had to be moved due to a double booking in the front bar.

The final was held in the backyard of what was then the house of June and Don Smyth's, licensees of The Longyard.



Murray Hartin

I can't tell you too much about the other entrants apart from the late John Philipson who took out the traditional section of the competition.

I read both of my poems, Rural Facts and Kev Koala, and thought I had no chance when this young bloke from out west did this fantastic poem about a cross-eyed bull.

Unfortunately for him, but fortunately for me there was someone in the audience - I think it may have been the late Charlee Marshall but can't be sure - who recognised the poem as belonging to 'Blue The Shearer' and the young bloke was disqualified.

That opened the door for me to win.

It was a fairly rough and tumble affair and I doubt if I'd even get a place in a heat of the current Imperial Hotel competition with such a performance - in fact I definitely wouldn't.

One of the judges was Jonathon King and I won a book of Australian folklore, as did Johnny Philipson.

The next year the competition was held in the Kentucky Fried Chicken carpark and was won by Marion Fitzgerald.

I'm fairly sure it was compered by James Blundell. Now I'm also fairly sure that it was late in 1988, when I was working at the Northern Daily Leader newspaper in Tamworth, that I got a call from Maureen Quickenden from the Tamworth Poetry Reading Group.

Maureen told me that it appeared they wouldn't be able to hold the competition in 1989 because they couldn't get a sponsor.

I took Maureen's number and then raced across the road to the Imperial Hotel where my mate, Matty Wynne, was the publican.

I asked Matty if he wanted to sponsor a poetry competition and he said "No worries" and, although the publicans have changed over the years, the competition remains, one of the premier competitions in Australian poetry.

I look back to that first competition and realise that if my mate's sister hadn't convinced me to go in the heat and if the young bloke hadn't been disqualified in the final, I may not be doing what I'm doing today, making a living as a poet.

Who would have thought that a poetry competition could change your life.

The "GREAT DUNNY CLASSIC"

The Dunedoo and District Development Group has set the dates for its next bush poetry competition.

After the success of their last effort organizers are as keen as mustard to get the ball rolling for yet another 'Great Dunny Classic'.

The Bush Poetry Competition will run from March 29 to 30 - 2003, with the deadline for entries in the written verse section set for February 7th.

There will be three sections: 1. Original Serious
2. Original Humorous Under 16's Original Verse
See page 26 for contact details.

DREAMS

© Brian Bell, Glenbrook NSW

When your life unwinds at the long day's end
and your mind lets go of the way things went,
does a thought creep in - that it's all pretend?
Is there room to feel life is heaven sent?
Limitations there have been set by you!
All you need is faith to make dreams come true.
Have you sensed the peace of a heartfelt dream,
as it wound its way to the morning light?
On the downward trend of a moonlit beam,
did you feel your dream had enhanced the night?
As the sadness flowed, did the joy shine through,
to restore belief in what dreams can do?
Dreams can help you reach for the highest goal,
once you find that peace and it fills your mind.
When the link is made to your deepest soul,
all restriction felt can be left behind.
When the night is dark, faith can see you through,
till the light you shine is your dream come true.

HAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOL POETS COMPETITION

On a minor scale but just as important as those on higher platforms will be a performance bush poetry competition to be held on Saturday 26th October at the Annual Hampton School Fete. Hampton is on the Jenolan Caves Road out from Lithgow NSW. Organizer, Michelle Duff, will be assisted by her father Milton Taylor, and already a good number of contestants are expected from the surrounding districts.

The competition will cater for Junior, Novice and an Open Sections.

Give Michelle a bell on 02 6359 3395



**Newlyweds
Doug
and
Carol
Hutcheson
Married in
Brisbane on
September
7th
2002.
Best wishes
From the
ABPA Inc.**

TAMWORTH TO ELKO

The following story is taken from the recollections of Marion Fitzgerald of North Star NSW.

Marion's first visit to Tamworth's Country Music Festival was in 1988. The sole reason for her being there was an Australian Bush Poetry Competition to be compared by James Blundell, winner of Starmaker 1987 and the 1988 nominee for a Golden Guitar for Best New Talent, which he won.

'James was the big drawcard for the poetry competition' said Marion, 'and it was sponsored by Kentucky Fried Chicken and organized by the Tamworth Poetry Group.

The Tamworth Poetry Group consisted of Maureen Quickenden (convener), Charles Snell, Charles Moffet, John Bishop, Cliff and Judith Hathaway, Keith and Cynthia Jones, and PIP xxxxxx???????

There were two award/sections, one for Original and one for Traditional verse the same as there is

today. The Heats were held in the KFC car park and ran from Wednesday through to Friday at lunchtime, starting about Midday. A stage was mounted in the car-park corner closest to the Highway.

Although they had a good sound system, the noise of the busy high-

way traffic created interference and there was no shade for the audience from the sweltering sun.

James was an excellent compere, concentrating on yarn spinning and poetry himself for the occasion and gained a lot of media attention because of his Gold Guitar nomination, hence each day saw a substantial crowd at the poetry heats despite the unfavourable venue.

The finals were held on Saturday after the grand parade but, with the threat of thunderstorms, it was decided to move the whole show across the road to a hall. (Possibly the Presbyterian Hall)

That venue was much cooler, but the rain pelted down so hard on the tin roof that the performers could hardly be heard.

The judges during the heats of the poetry were members of the Tamworth Poetry Group.

On finals day they had a panel of new judges, one of them being Ian Slack-Smith (now member for Gwydir) and famous for his very funny poetry books called the Cubaroo Tales, and poetry recita-

tions.

Some of the competitors were John Philipson, Gertrude Skinner, Phil Godfrey, Dave Dunbar, I think Phillipa Powell, Marion Fitzgerald, and some members of the poetry group, such as John Bishop, and Col Newsome, and possibly Keith Garvey.

Marion Fitzgerald won the Original Section and John Philipson won the traditional.

Gertrude Skinner was 75 that year and had only started writing humorous poetry five years before hand - mainly based on her days at Mungundi as a stockman's wife.

Her most famous poem at the time was 'The Avocado' Poem with which she is mostly associated.

Phil Godfrey (now a DJ in NZ) and Dave Dunbar were the first of the real 'Larrikins' on the poetry scene with their slapstick bush comedy, 'Dave and Mabel' yarns from Dave, Phil's humorous poetry, his most memorable being 'Classical Gas'. This duo came from Armidale and were seldom seen apart.

John Philipson was a master reciter of Traditional Poetry and had a huge repertoire from the serious to the humorous. Bush poetry had been a life-long interest of his.

Other than appearing in Ag. College reviews, 1988 in Tamworth was the Marion's first public appearance on stage, her first performance competition, and her first win.

As with Murray Hartin, things started to change after that. News spread quickly and on returning to Moree where she worked, Marion found news of her win had spread so quickly that she was inundated with requests for appearances at public gatherings.

Within days of her return, Marion was booked by the Evening View Club to recite at their function that week. Bookings followed from Rotary, Apex and Lions Clubs, and every charity event and organization around town.

All this was quite unexpected and, armed only with a handful of original poems, the pressure was on for Marion to write more and more and, looking back on these humble beginnings, she says 'and all I wanted was to see James Blundell'.

It was in 1988 that Marion first met Murray Hartin, a reporter for the Northern Daily Leader, who was covering the bush poetry competition.

Marion writes, "Murray was not involved in the poetry competition in 1988 but told me that he (and another fellow who's name I can't recall) 'tried to start off a poetry competition in the paddock behind the Longyard the previous year, 1987'

"They were his words - from the sound of it they didn't have any sponsorship but were just a keen bunch of bards who wanted to try and attract other bards who were at the festival and have a good time.'

'Although it turned out to be only a one-off due to the out-of-the-way venue in a hot dusty paddock, and



Marion Fitzgerald

perhaps wasn't even a crowd pleaser, it certainly did bring poets together who were to form the backbone of performing poets in Tamworth – John Philipson, Phil Godfrey and Dave Dunbar were the performers and competitors along with Murray that first year behind the Longyard (Keith Garvey and Col Newsome could also have been there) - - -

In 1989 Marion returned to the Tamworth Festival to compete in the Imperial Hotel sponsored Bush Poetry Competition, organized by the Tamworth Poetry Group and it was held on a stage in the car park of the hotel. There was a shady annexe over the stage but audience members still sweltered in the heat. However this event was well attended and competition was strong with performers coming from further afield.

Marion Fitzgerald won the Original Section, Greg Barklmore from Cobar was second and John Philipson of Tamworth won the Traditional section.

Marion's first prize was \$5.00 in an envelope, but little did she realise at the time how valuable that \$5 would become.

Seated in the audience during the finals of that competition were members of the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame searching for talent to represent them at the Elko Cowboy Gathering in Nevada in January the next year.

She didn't become aware of this until October that year (1989) when an invitation arrived from Hal Cannon of the Western Folklife Center asking her to appear with five other representatives of the ASHOF to honour the Australian Stockman. These entertainers were Ted Egan, Nerys Evans, Bruce Simpson, Bill Gunn and Ranald Chandler, deputy Chairman of the Hall of Fame.

The tour included five days of performing at the Elko Poetry Gathering, which also coincided with Australia Day and shows at the Cowboy Hall of Fame, Oklahoma, the Gene Autry Museum, Los Angeles, and various other venues during the two weeks tour.

The Elko trip coincided with the next Tamworth Festival (1990), and during this time a new kid appeared on the block in the guise of a young policeman from Warwick Qld.

He won the Original Section with 'Granny and the Snake'. Enter - Mark Gliori.

In 1991 Marion Compered the Bush Poetry finals at the Tamworth Country Music Festival with Marco's once again winning the original section with a splendid performance.

Marion also presented the Blackened Billy Award for written verse to a very shy, young man with a poem about Australia. As he recited his works on stage he became an instant hit. His name was Bobby Miller from Maryborough Qld.

"I knew then that with Marco and Bobby on the scene, bush poetry was heading into an exciting time."

In 1992 Jim Haynes collected a few poets together after arranging with June Smythe of the Longyard Hotel to borrow the front bar room for performing bush poetry in the early morning.

It was not a competition and did not clash with the Imperial competition which continued on year after year in the lunchtime spot. Each of the venues enhanced the other, being the only poetry venues in town for the festival.

Performers in 1992 at the Longyard were Jim Haynes, Marco Gliori, Bobby Miller, John Philipson, Marion Fitzgerald, Murray Hartin, Gertrude Skinner, Charlee Marshall, Col Newsome and Blue the Shearer.

It ran for about 4 days in 1992 and by the last day the little bar-room was filled to capacity with eager poetry fans.

In 1993 June Smythe opened the Goonoo Goonoo Room to the poets where she also served breakfast for the audience – hence the first real Bush Poets Breakfast in Tamworth began, hosted by Jim Haynes. It ran for 5 days up to and over the long-week-end of the festival.



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It is hoped that further information will be to hand in time for the next issue of the newsletter about other developments in Tamworth and other centres. Send in your history. We'll use it sooner than later.



The Longyard Hotel - Tamworth

Regular Monthly Events

New South Wales:

- 1st Tues **TUGGERAH** Lakes Poetry Group. 7 pm The Entrance Leagues Club. 3 Bay Village Rd, Bateau Bay.
Joan Johnson 02 4332 5318, Judy Stanton 02 4388 5972
- Each Tues **TWEED HEADS** Poets and Writers on the Tweed. Library Meeting Room. Lorraine Richards 07 5590 9395
- 1st Thurs **GLADESVILLE** - North by Northwest Poetry & Folk Club. Cornucopia Café. Graeme Johnson 02 9874 7653
(Grounds Old Gladesville Hospital - off Punt Rd-follow signs). Jenny Carter 02 9887 1856 or 0412 222 690
- 3rd Sat. **LIVERPOOL** Poet's 12 - 4 pm Liverpool Library - 170 George Street Liverpool. David Price 02 9825 0402
- 2nd Mon **KATOOMBA** - Parakeet's Poets - Parakeet Café - 7 pm. Katoomba St, Katoomba. Denis Kevans 02 4757 3119
- 2nd Tues **HUNTER** Bush Poets. 7 pm, Tarro Hotel, Anderson Dr, Tarro. Bob Skelton 02 4953 2751
- 2nd Wed **DORRIGO** Mountain Top Poets, 7 pm, April, June, August, October. Murray Suckling 02 6657 2139
- 2nd Thurs **TAMWORTH** Poetry Reading Grp. unit 2, 8 Illoura St, Tamworth. Keith 02 6766 4164. Maureen 02 6765 6067
- 2nd Fri **BUNDEENA** - Pheasant's Hut Folk Club - Ph. Yuri 02 9527 0955 - 0419 412 093
- 2nd Fri **COOMA** The Monaro Leisure Club - 7 pm Vale St. Cooma - Elaine 02 6454 3128
- 2nd Sat **KEMPSEY** or Port Macquarie. Hastings Macleay Bush Poets. Phone Rod 02 65813161 or Janice 02 6581 3552
- 3rd Fri **JUNEE** Bush Poetry Group. 7.30pm, Junee Community Centre. Brian Beasley PO Box 82 Junee. 02 6924 1317
- Last Tues **GRAFTON** Live Poet's Society - Roches Hotel, 7.30pm. Bill Kearns 02 6642 2772
- 4th Wed **IVERELL** Wednesday Writers, 7.30 pm, Empire Hotel. Ida Morse 02 6722 2425
- 4th Thurs **QUEANBEYAN** Bush Poets. Poet's lane, Queanbeyan. David Meyers 02 6286 1891
- 2nd last Mon **MID-COAST** Sundowners - Bush Poets meet in a private home. Reid 02 6554 9788. Phil 02 6552 6389
- Last Tues **GOSFORD** Spaghetti Poetry Group. Gee Wong Restaurant, 197 Mann St. Bob & Ester Sennett 02 4325 2590
- Last Thurs **PENRITH** Writers on the River, Caddies Coffee Shop, 2 - 3 Castlereagh St Penrith. Brian Bell 02 4739 2219
- Last Fri **KANGAROO VALLEY** Folk Music Club. Bush Poets welcome. Carl Leddy 02 4465 1621 re venue.
- Last Sat **MORISSETT** Australian Christian Writers Fellowship, Hunter Div, Morisset Baptist Church Hall, 1.30 - 4 pm.
Every 3 months **WHALAN** Poetic Folk, 24 Finisterre Ave Whalan 2770. "Arch" Bishop 02 9625 7245

QUEENSLAND:

- Each Wed. **TOWNSVILLE** Writers - 7.30 pm Hodel Room, City Library, Thuringowa - Ph. Phil Heang 07 4773 4223
- WINTON** - Matilda Caravan Park - Pinki & her Pee Wee Poets
- 1st Thur. **MAPLETON** - Red Kettle Folk Club. Mapleton Hotel - 8.30pm Jacqueline Bridle 07 5478 6263
- 1st Sat. **EUMUNDI** Poets & Musicians - Eumundi Markets in Courtyard outside Rob's Bakery. Elizabeth 07 5449 1991
- 2nd Sat. **BUNDABERG** Poets Society 1.30 pm - Jim 07 4152 9624 - Sandy Lees 07 4151 4631 - Marilyn 07 4154 1663
- 1st & 3rd Wed. **KILCOY** gardens Motor Inn - Hope Street Kilcoy 7.30 p.m. Phone 54 971 100 (Robyn) or 54 971 458 (Pat)
- 1st & 3rd Sun. **NORTH PINE** Country Markets, 9 am Dad & Dave's Billy Tea & Damper. 07 3285 2845 - 3886 1552
- 2nd & 4th Thurs. **GYMPIE** Golden Pen Poets. Old Gympie Town Hall. 7 pm. Phil Morrison, 07 4773 4223
- 3rd Tues. **REDLANDS** Poets Society. Times vary. Aug. meeting 2pm. Sept. 7pm. Vivienne 07 38244038 - Elaine 32452114
- 3rd Sun. **WOODFORD** - Lairs, Larrikins and Liars. 10.30 am - Jalia's Café - Mark Feldman 0407 625 408 - 07 5496 1157
- 3rd. Mon. **SHORNCLIFFE** - 7.30 pm - Poets in Park - Café on Park - Anne 07 3869 1282

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

- 3rd Wed **WILUNGA** - South Australian Bush Poets, 7.30 pm, Alma Pub Long Room. Maurie O'Brien 08 8326 8788
- Last Tues **WHYALLA** Writers Group. Colby Maddigan 08 8645 1771

VICTORIA

- Monthly **CORRYONG** Top of the Murray Poets and Story Tellers Corryong - Jan Lewis 02 6077 4332
- 1st Mon **KYABRAM** Bush Poets. Every 2nd Month, Kyabram Fauna Park, 7.30 pm. Mick Coventry 03 5852 2097
- 6 weekly, **GIPPSLAND** Bush Poets. Rosedale Hotel, 7.30 pm. Dennis Carstairs 03 5145 6128

WESTERN AUSTRALIA 1st Frid **CANNING BRIDGE** - WA Bush Poets & Yarnspinners, 7.30 pm, Raffles Hotel -
Michelle Sorrell 08 9367 4963 mailto:msorrell@inet.net.au

Last Thursdays. **MARGARET RIVER**. 7pm at the Community Centre. Ph. Brian Gale 08 9757 2431

FAW WOLLONDILLY

2002 Literary Competition

The Winners of the Wollondilly Regional FAW Literary Competition for a Short Story, Traditional Rhyming Poetry and Free Verse Poetry, will be announced during the Poets Picnic to be conducted at the Warrimbirra Native Sanctuary on the Old Hume Highway at Bargo NSW (Just past Picton) from 11am on Sunday 27th October 2002.

Entry is free, bring along a picnic lunch or make use of refreshments available. There is plenty of sheltered seating, coffee shop and barbeque facilities. Performers are welcome to read their own poetry or work by their favourite poet. Come along and have a great day out with fellow writers and poets - last year's picnic was a huge success. ALL WELCOME

FAW Wollondilly Regional— Vince Morrison. Ph. 02 4684 1704 (Paid Advert)

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ACCEPTED FOR
THE BOOK SHELF
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POET'S CALENDAR

- Oct. 7 Closing date. **Dingo Australia & U3A Dalby Inc. Writing Competition** - Year of the Outback theme. Short story & Poetry competition. SSAE to The Convener U3A Dalby Inc. Writing Competition. P.O. Box 961 Dalby 4405
- Oct. 12/13 **VICTORIAN BUSH POETRY STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS** - Stratford Victoria. Gippsland Writers Festival. Open Original & Traditional. Junior Sections (under 16yrs)
- October 13 Mid-Coast Sundowners Bush Poets BBQ Breakfast. Open mike Session **Forster Memorial Services Club** 8 am. In conjunction with the Great Lakes Junior Written Poetry Competition presentations. Ph. 02 6558 9788
- October 27 **Wollondilly Regional FAW Picnic**. Warrimbirra Native Sanctuary, Old Hume Highway, Bargo NSW from 11am. Vince Morrison. Ph. 02 4684 1704
- October 31 Closing date. Australian **BUSH LAUREATE AWARDS** —
- Nov. 9 - 10 **DORRIGO Mountain Top Gathering** featuring Russell Churcher, Dorrigo Bowling Club 1 pm Sat. Breakfast 8am Sunday with Bill Kearns and co. and open mic sessions Ph. Murray Suckling. 02 6657 2139.
- Nov. 16 Lismore Norco Bush Poetry Competition. Senior and Junior Written - Open & Novice Male and Female Performance Sections. Best Overall Performer wins a trip for two to New Zealand with Freedom Air. Phone 07 5595 2247 - 07 5527 8688 or Write to: Beaudesert Bush Poetry Competition P. O. Box 1229 Nerang Qld 4211 Email: info@austcountry.com.au
- Nov. 30 Closing date. **BLACKENED BILLY WRITTEN VERSE COMPETITION 2003**. SSAE for entry forms to Maureen Quickenden - PO Box 1164 Tamworth NSW 2340
- Dec 1. Mid North Coast NSW Bush Poets Xmas Get-together. 12 noon at Sam Smyth's home. 242 Old Station Road, East Kempsey. Enq. 02 6562 6861
- Dec. 6-7-8 **YOUNG NSW CHERRY FESTIVAL**. Open Performance Poetry Competition. \$1,200 PRIZEMONEY. Entries close Nov. 6. Ph Greg Broderick 02 6382 3883
- Dec. 28. **WOODFORD FOLK FESTIVAL**.
- Dec. 18-Jan1 **GULGONG Folk Festival**. Australian Bush Poetry, Yarn-spinning, workshops, music, dance. Contact Bob Campbell 02 6373 4600 Di O'Mara 6374 4600 ncmpton@hwy.com.au
- 2003 Dates**
- Jan. 16 - 27 **Tamworth Country Music Festival**.
- Jan. 18 - 27 **Tamworth. Traditional Bush Poets Breakfasts. Longyard Hotel**. Frank Daniel 02 6344 1477
- Jan. 16 - 27 **Tamworth. Australian Bush Poets**. Anglican Church Hall Carthage St. - Carol Reffold. 03 9740 4868
- Jan. 16 - 27 **Tamworth. City Bowling Club Poets Breakfasts**. Sam Smyth coordinator. Ph. 02 6562 6861
- Jan. 25th. **Tamworth. The Blackened Billy Verse Competition** - Presentation of Winners. Imperial Hotel 10.30 am.
- Jan. 25 Closing Date. **John O'Brien Poetry and Prose Competition**. Verse awards for Traditional, Contemporary @ Humorous. Prose: Open Class. Short Story not to exceed 3000 words. SSAE to PO Box 89 Narrandera NSW 2700 Ph. 1800 672 392 <mailto:tourist.centre@narrandera.nsw.gov.au>
- Feb. 1- 2 Elmslea Homestead **Bungendore NSW**. Poets Breakfast.
- Feb. 7 Closing date. **Dunedoo 'Great Dunny Classic'** - Written Verse Competition to 100 lines. No late entries. \$5.00 entry fee. SSAE for Entry forms etc. Dunedoo & District Development Group, P.O. Box 1, Dunedoo, NSW 2844 Ph: (02) 63 751 975 FAX: (02) 63 751 976 Email: dddgroup@bigpond.com - Sue Stoddart (see March 29)
- Feb 14 - 16 **Boyup Brook W.A. Annual Festival**. Poets Breakfasts etc. Ph. Brian Gale 08 9757 2431
- March 9 Claiming the date. **Wauchope Bush Poets** Competition - Hastings MacLeay Bush Poets Group, Port McQuarie NSW - Contact Jan Downes 02 6581 3552. Email cut_downes@hotmail.com or Rod Worthing - 02 6581 3161
- March 14-17 **Narrandera NSW John O'Brien Bush Festival**.
- March 14-16 **O'Mara's High Country Poets** Stanthorpe. Claiming the date. Leaflets & entryforms out in October Contact Jack Drake ph 07 46837169. jdrake@halenet.com.au
- March 16 **Beaudesert Norco Bush Poetry Competition** - Written section and Open Male, Female and Novice Performance Sections. Phone 07 5595 2247 - 07 5527 8688 or Write to: Beaudesert Bush Poetry Competition P. O. Box 1229 Nerang Qld 4211 Email: info@austcountry.com.au
- March 29-30 **Dunedoo NSW 'Great Dunny Classic'** Claiming the date. Contact Sue Stoddart 02 6375 1975
- April 20 **Nambucca Heads Poets Breakfast**. 8 am at the Bowlo. Feature poet TBA. Enq. Maureen 02 6568 5269
- April 25 - 27 **Canowindra Balloon Festival**
- Aug. 15 Closing date. Outback Writers Centre Inc. **Dubbo National Poetry Competition**. Max. 80 Lines. Usual conditions apply. No limit to number of entries at \$5.00 per poem. No entry form required. Add cover sheet. Send to PO Box 2994 Dubbo NSW 2830

ENTRIES IN THE BUSH POETS CALENDAR ARE POSTED FREE OF CHARGE. MAKE SURE YOUR FESTIVAL IS LISTED

FULL HOUSE FOR "GO-BUSH"

For the third successive year the 'Go Bush Show' at Warialda NSW performed to a full house. This popular evening of bush poetry and ballads by selected renowned entertainers is booked out earlier in advance each year.

The 'Go Bush Show' is hosted by Marion Fitzgerald and this year Ray Essery, Noel Stallard and Double Decker Dave set the scene for a rollicking night on 10th August at the Warialda Golf and Bowling Club.

Ray performed at the first show in 2000, and returned this year to an eagerly awaiting fan club of farmers who 'cow-think' as Ray does. In fact, it is obvious that Warialda has adopted Ray as their 'token poet', with Ray having a soft spot for Warialda as well, so it's likely that Ray will be returning to future turn-outs for that instant 'laugh effect'.

'Double-Decker Dave' was an instant hit. Just when you thought they had thrown away the mould for Stan Costa and Slim Dusty, slow-talkin', slow-walkin' Dave steps in. Dave has a repertoire of fresh bush ballads, mostly self-written, which he belts out with hilarity and brilliant guitar work, and he doesn't miss the opportunity for a string of yarns in between.

Double Decker Dave was certainly responsible for a lot of 'sore-jaw' during the night.

Noel Stallard's presentation of original verse, coupled with the works of Bob Magor wet the audience's appetite for more from this very polished performer, but what greeted them in the second half the audience was not prepared for, and their spontaneous laughter and appreciation proved what a professional entertainer Noel is.

Dressed as the Catholic Parish Priest for this presentation of John O'Brien's poetry, Noel captivated the audience and even more so where he selected two unsuspecting drovers to participate on stage in one of John O'Brien's poems.

Marion kept the show moving along with her own brand of home-grown humorous bush verse plus some selected verse from Grafton's funny poet Bill Kearns.

The Go Bush Show donated over \$3000 towards the new Doctor's residence in town; another mighty effort by the Warialda Rotary Club and the Yallaroi Arts Council to keep the medical services in the local community first class.

The Primary Schools of Warialda and outlying bush schools of North Star, Yetman, Croppa Creek and Tulloona also benefited from the Go Bush Show, with Noel Stallard presenting his school show to the children in the days leading up to the show. For a large farming community that was once starved of bush poetry the go bush team has certainly started to make an impact both from an entertaining and educational point of view and it is planned to keep 'Go Bush' well into the future.

NORTH PINE BUSH POETS GROUP Inc.

Following are the results of the 2002 'Year of the Outback' Camp Oven Bush Poetry Festival held at the Pioneer Village Country Music Hall at North Pine Country Park, Petrie Qld. from Friday 16th to Sunday 18th August. Great weather and great people made this seventh annual gathering a truly memorable Bush Poetry Festival.

The Saturday night concert was a runaway success with full house crowd of 250 people enjoying the antics of Milton Taylor, Glenny Palmer, Shirley Friend and Garry Lowe who, after a full day of compering and judging, put on a hilarious show for everyone.

Results of performance competitions are:

Novice. Graham Fredriksen, Tony Sullivan, Lisa Bye. Junior. Stuart Nivison, Julian Luke, Matt Collins. Open Serious Female. Melanie Hall, Chris Webster, Patricia Markey. Open Humorous Male. Noel Stallard, John Best, Ron Selby. Original. Melanie Hall, Ken Dean, Laree Chapman. Open Serious Male. Noel Stallard, Ken Dean, Evan Schnalle. Open Humorous Female. Debbie Anderson, Anita Reed, Melanie Hall. Camp Oven 1 minute Cook-Up. Dean Collins.

Overall Festival Champion. Noel Stallard.

The North Pine Bush Poets Written Competition was adjudged by Ellis Campbell of Dubbo NSW with 124 entries to be accounted for.

Open Section. Graham Fredriksen, *Goodbye Billy*. Ron Stevens, *Of Clans & Tribes & Travel Times*. Ken Dean, *The Silver Song of Bullock Bells*.

H.C. Ron Stevens, Ken Dean, Graham Fredriksen, Graeme Johnson, Joyce Alchin, Doug Hutcheson.

Commended. Graham Fredriksen, Doug Hutcheson, Don Adams, Joyce Alchin, Graham Fredriksen.

Junior Section. Junior 12-16 yrs. Brittany Kearns, Cody Edwards. Junior 9-12 yrs. Lauren Winney, Alysha Eitel, Billy Peillon. H.C Juniors. Alysha Eitel, Daniel Bowden, Aysha Eitel, Scott Claydon. Commended. Estelle Schumacher, Sophie Ingleton.

President of the North Pine Bush Poets Group, Ron Liefkett of Lawnton, acknowledged the hard work and determination of those who contributed to the success of the weekend; claiming it as one of the best festivals yet.

Each of the Junior competitors were presented with copies of the 'Little Swaggie's Book of Verse,' and in addition, were given copies of the ABPA Annual donated by long time ABPA supporter, Ron Selby, whose generosity is well known. He made a similar gesture at the Bundy Muster a month earlier. Goodonya Ron!

"Never be afraid to try something new.

Amateurs built the Ark, professionals built the Titanic"

MAN FROM SNOWY RIVER FESTIVAL

The latest news to hand indicates a growing popularity in the very successful Man From Snowy River Festival at Corryong each year.

The Inaugural *MFSR* Festival kicked off in October 1995, marking the centenary of the release of Banjo Paterson's *The Man From Snowy River and Other Verses*, his first publication which sold out before the first print became available.

This festival ran alongside the original *High Country Festival*, (held in Corryong since the 1960's), for a couple of years and as the two conjoined became known as the *'Man From Snowy River Festival'*, incorporating horse events, bush ballads and bush poetry.

In 2003 the festival will be conducted before Easter from Thursday 10th to Sunday 13th April.

The Festival Board agrees that the Poetry and Bush Music are (nearly!) as important as the horse events and are growing in popularity each year, thanks to Jan Lewis's 'faithful' poets and musos who have volunteered their time so generously at each festival.

Jan tells us that they are refining some of the Poetry categories such as the Traditional section, now calling it 'Australian Ballad not written by the performer' allowing poets more freedom to choose from an old poem or a modern one (copyright permitting).

"We're also expanding the music categories, keeping the Aussie theme," said Jan.

Jan Lewis is the untiring coordinator of the bush poetry side of the festival and like so many organisers, finds herself employed twelve months of the year looking after the performances, the competitions and the sponsorships. "More competitors, more judges, more expenses, therefore more work and more sponsorship needed. Whew! (Keep smiling Jan). "Needless to say, I haven't had much of a rest, and I'm on the prowl for performers!"

Corryong will be in need of 10 poets and 5 musicians for judging, entertaining and MC work in 2003.

'Whipstick Wortho' and Carol Reffold did a promotion for the MFSR festival at the Melbourne Show on Farm Sunday 22nd September, which created a lot of new interest in our craft.

A special cheerio to Lawrie Sheridan (one of Jan's year-round helpers), who is convalescing in Albury Base Hospital after suffering a stroke.

Festival flyers and Poetry & Music Entry forms will be posted out in December to those on our database. To be removed from, added to, or updated on the database, phone Jan Lewis 02 6077 4332 email: poetfarm@corryongcec.net.au.



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